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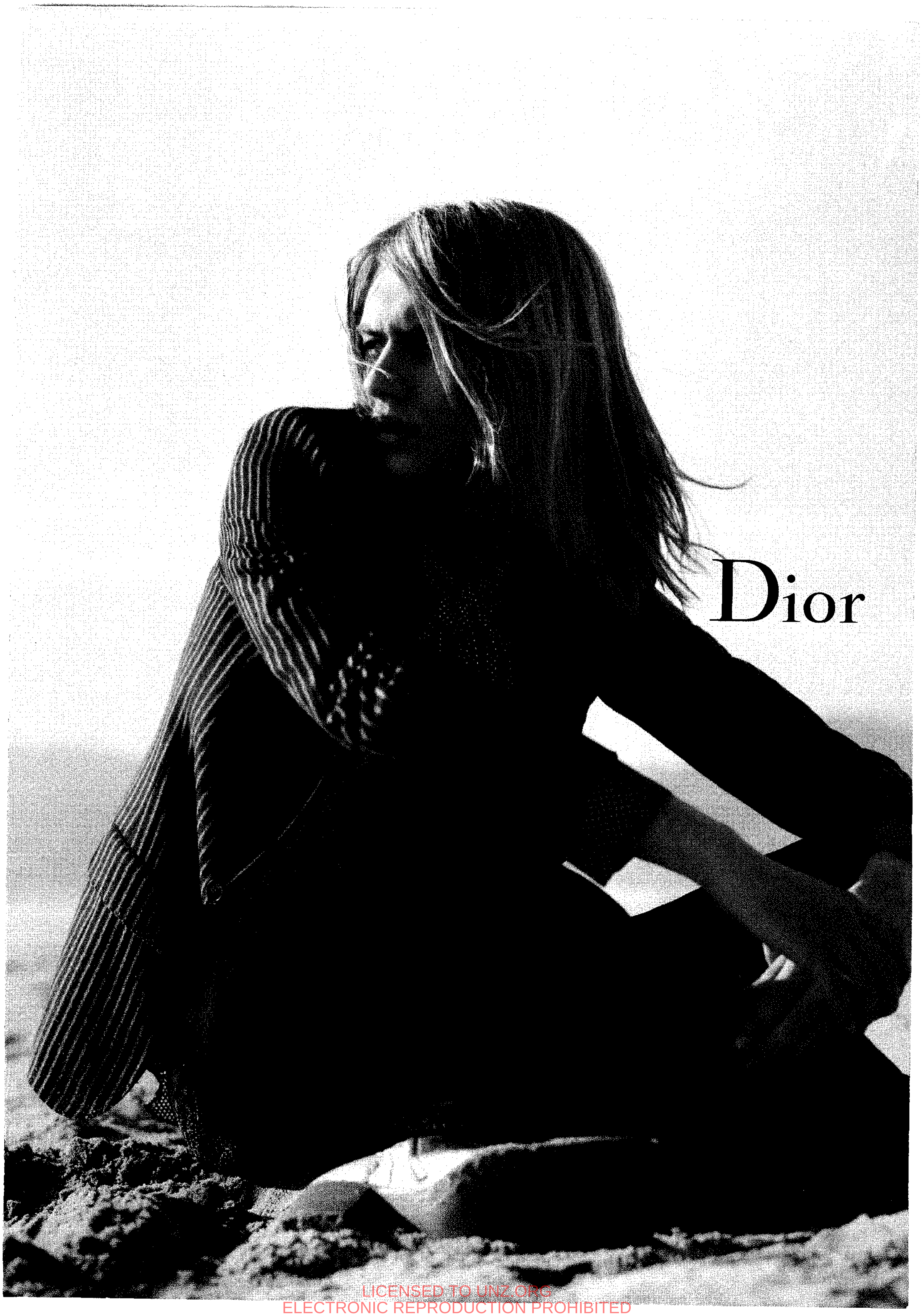
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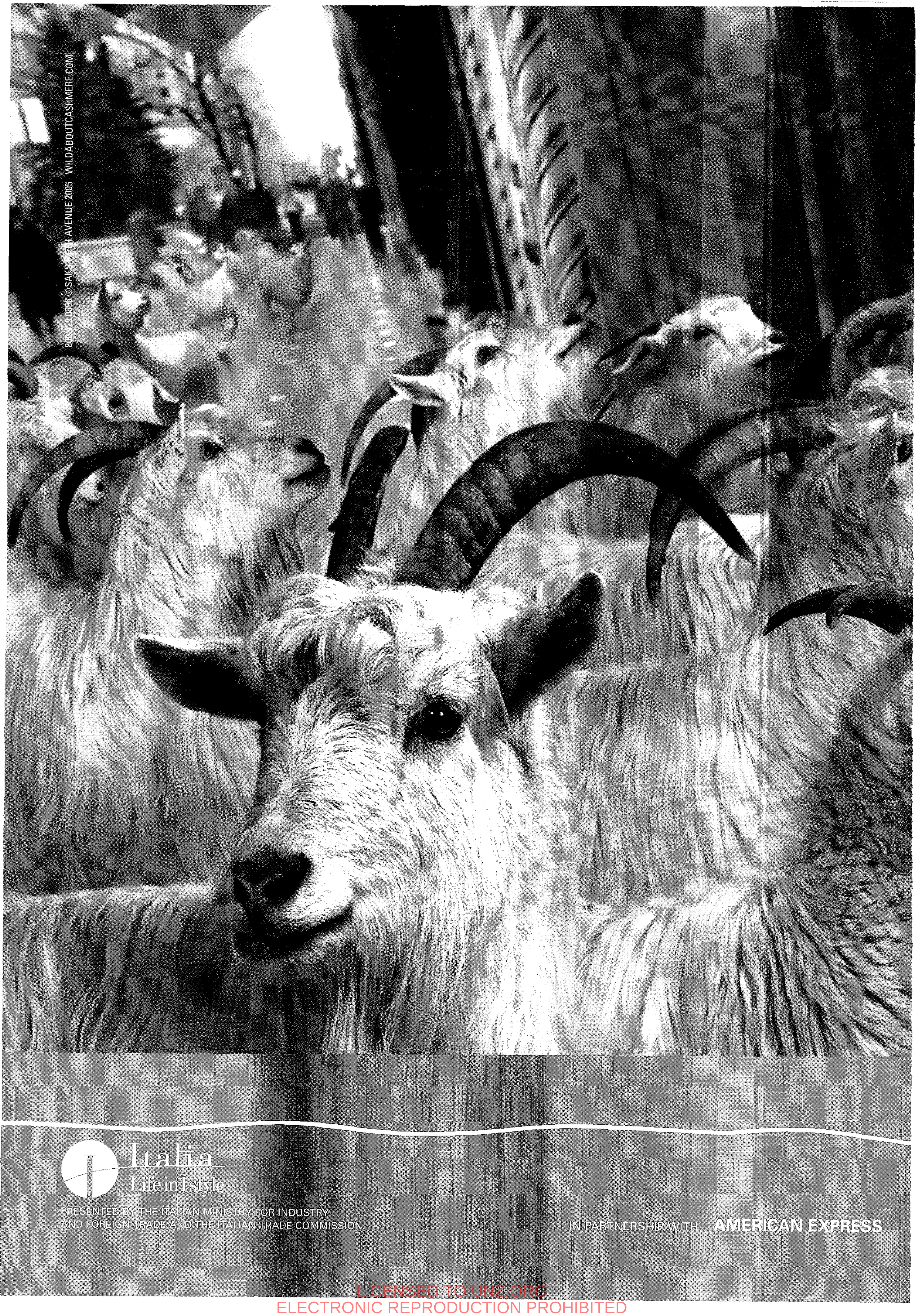

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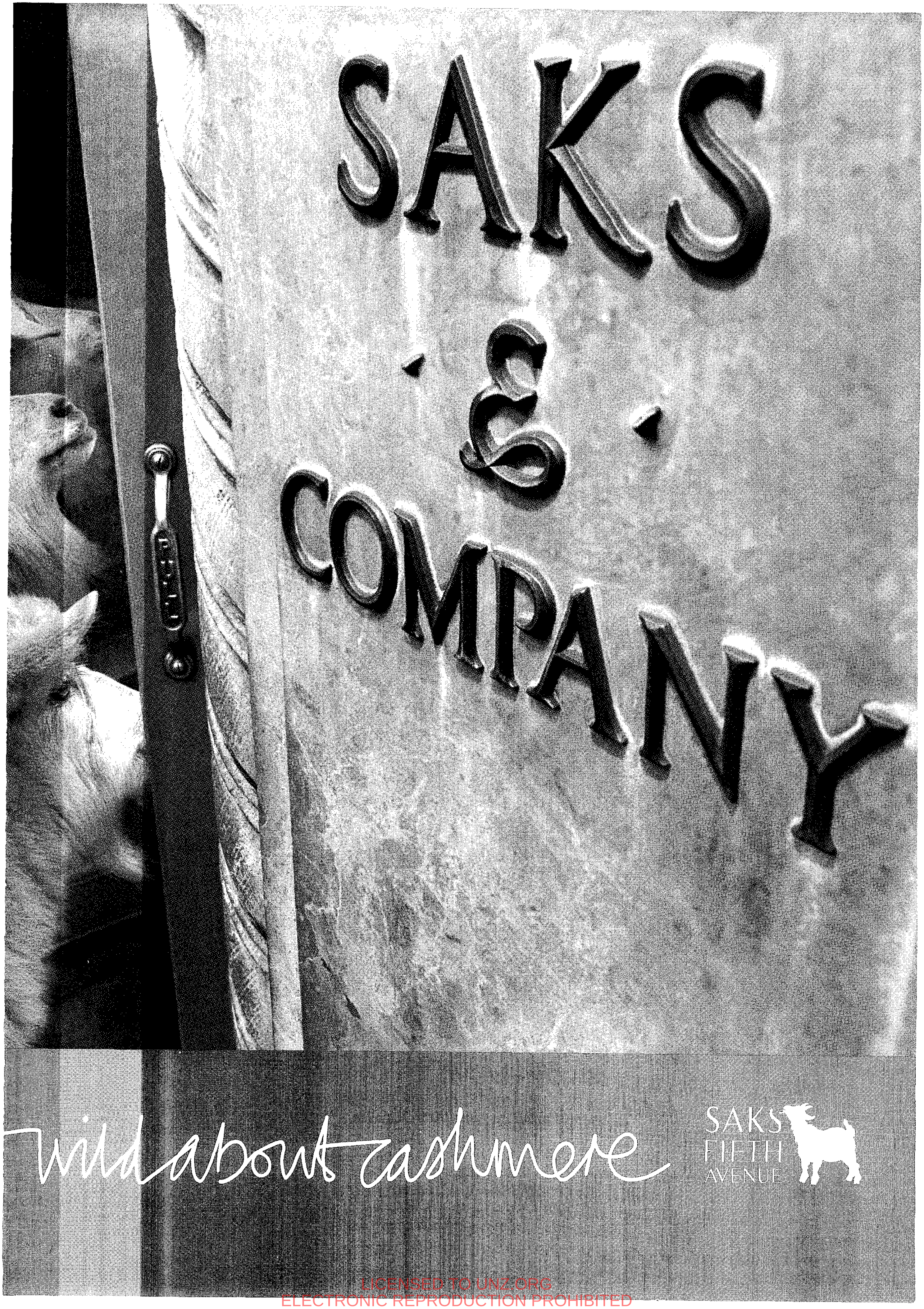
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THE ART & ARCHITECTURE ISSUE

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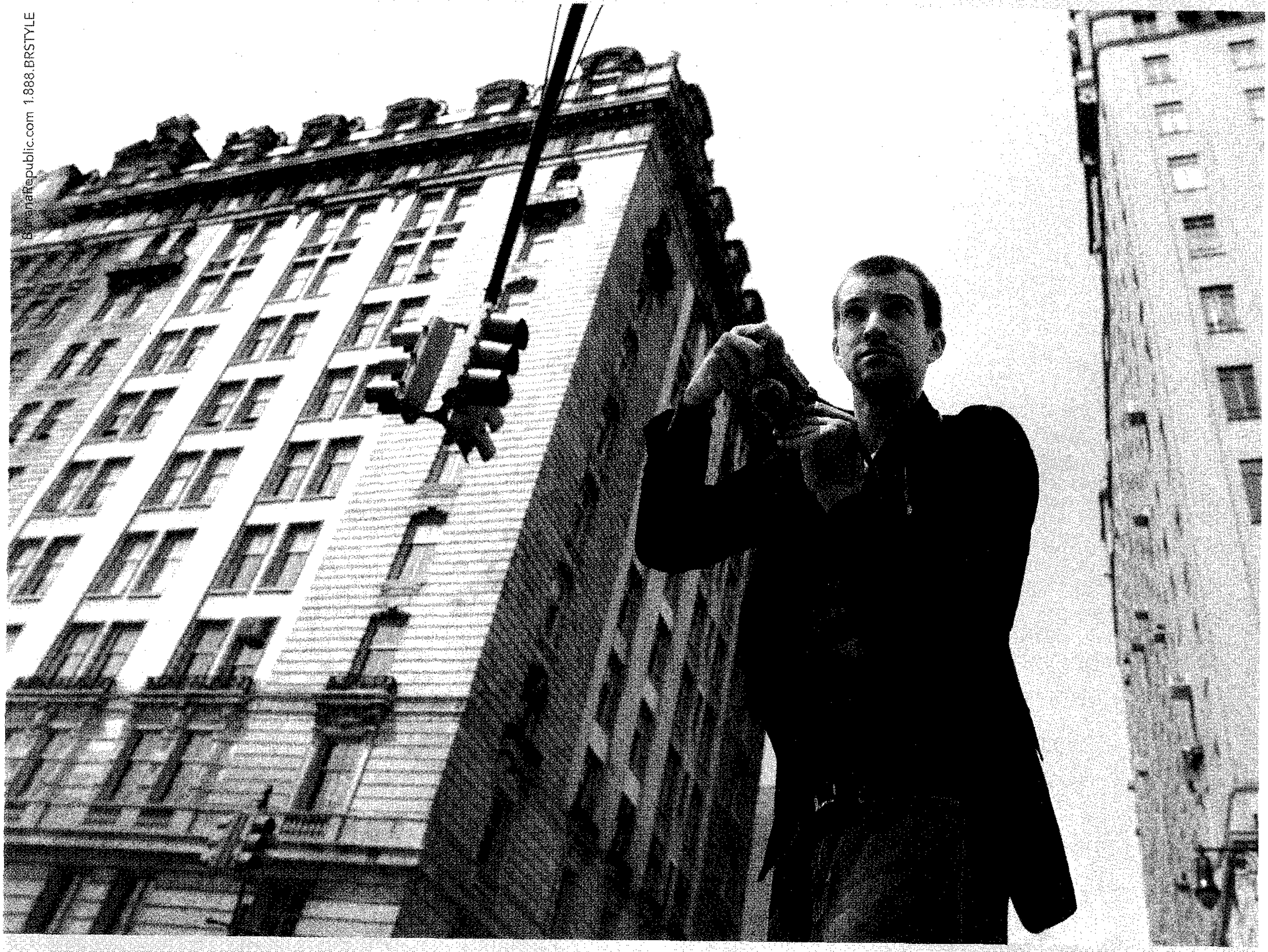

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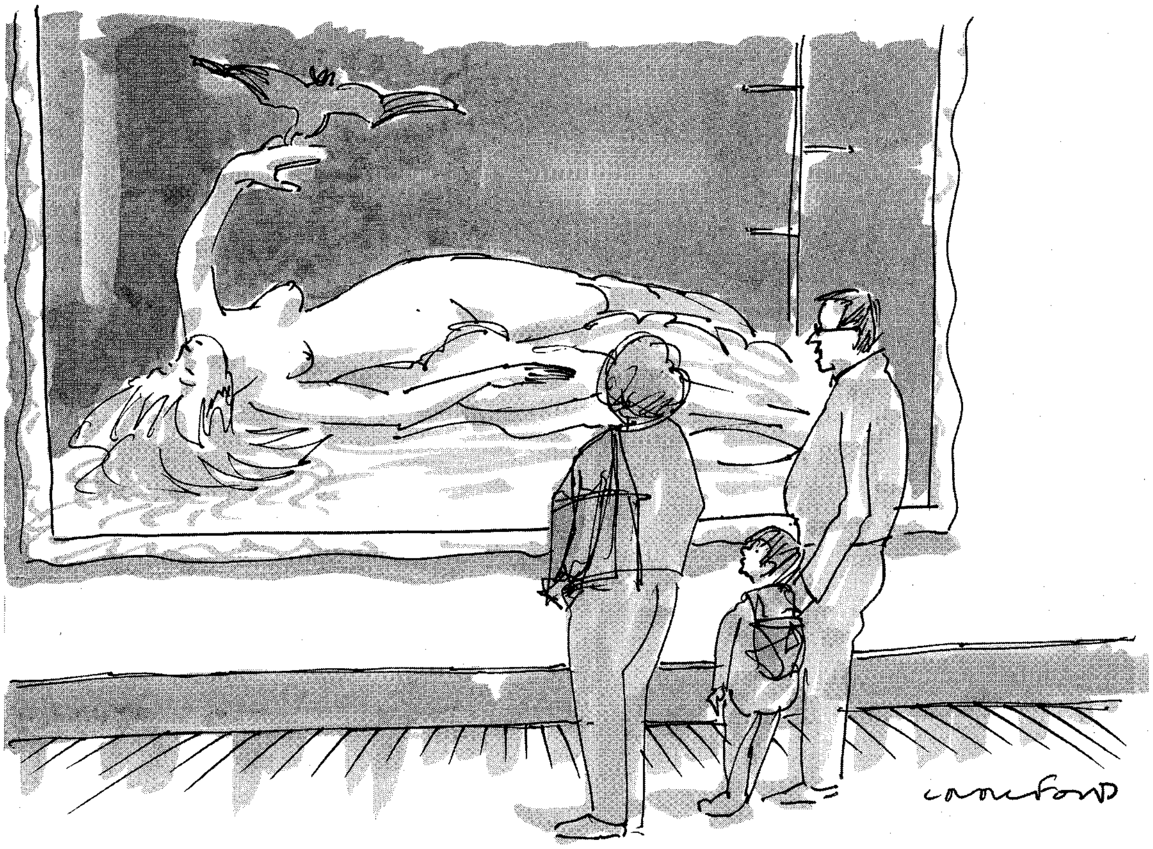

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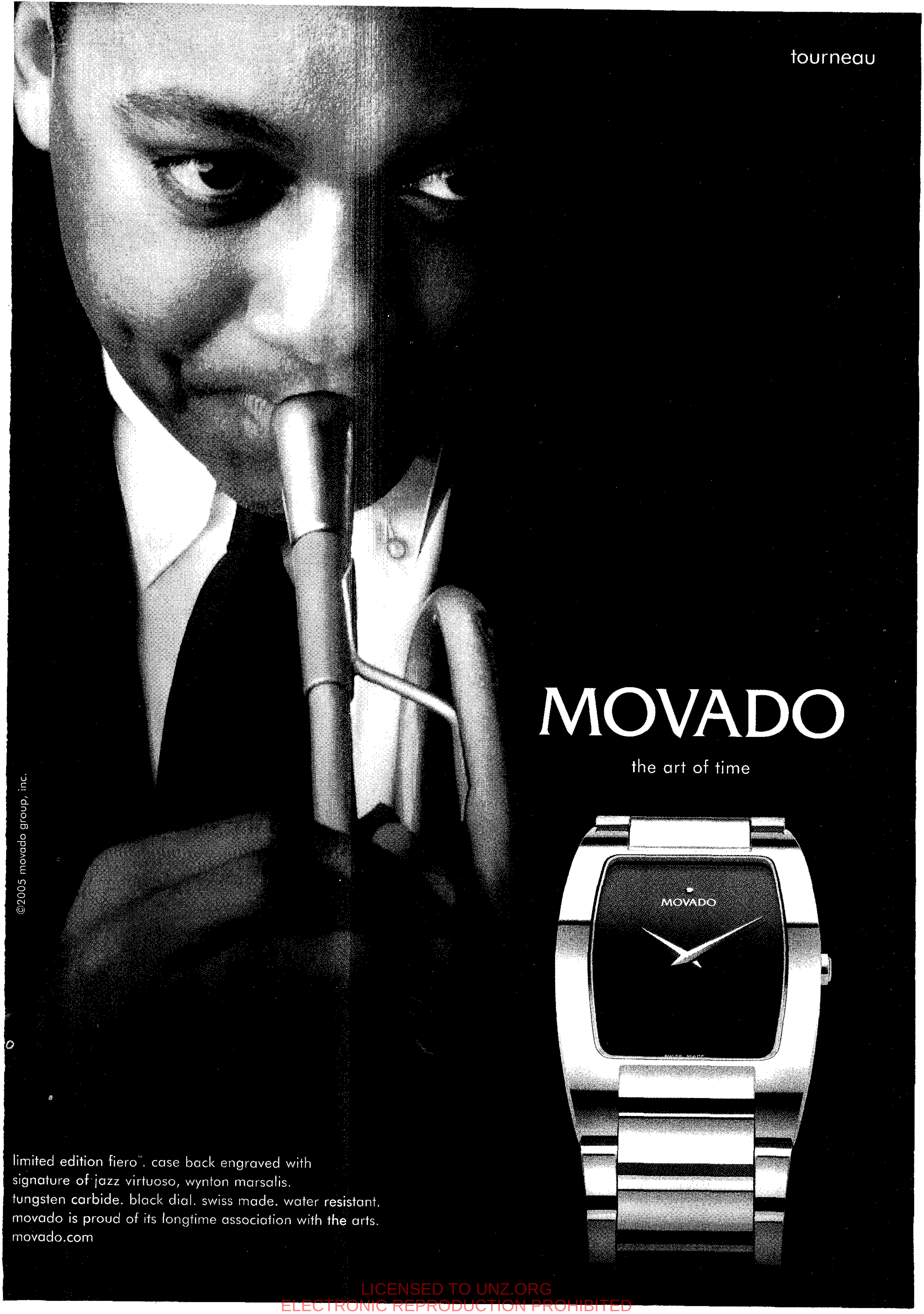
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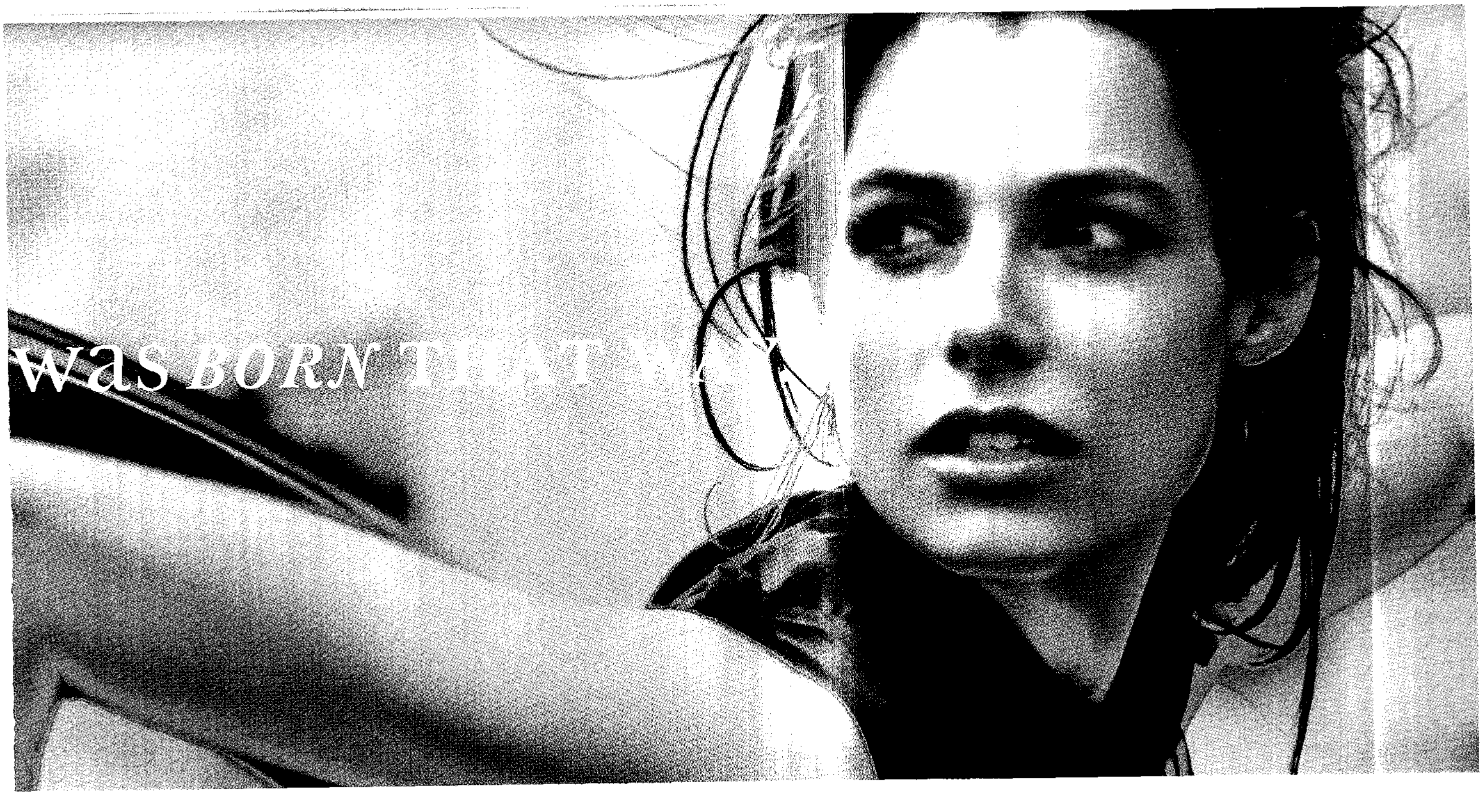
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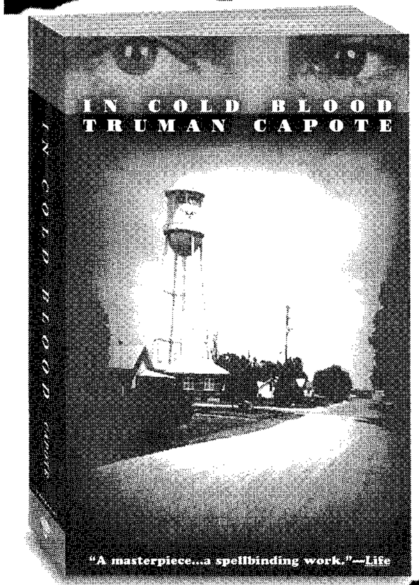

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Art Spiegelman ("Discovering America," p. 152) will have his comic art included in an exhibition, "Masters of American Comics," at the Hammer Museum and the Museum of Contemporary Art, in Los Angeles, next month.

Judith Thurman ("The Kimono Painter," p. 116) will publish a collection of essays next year.

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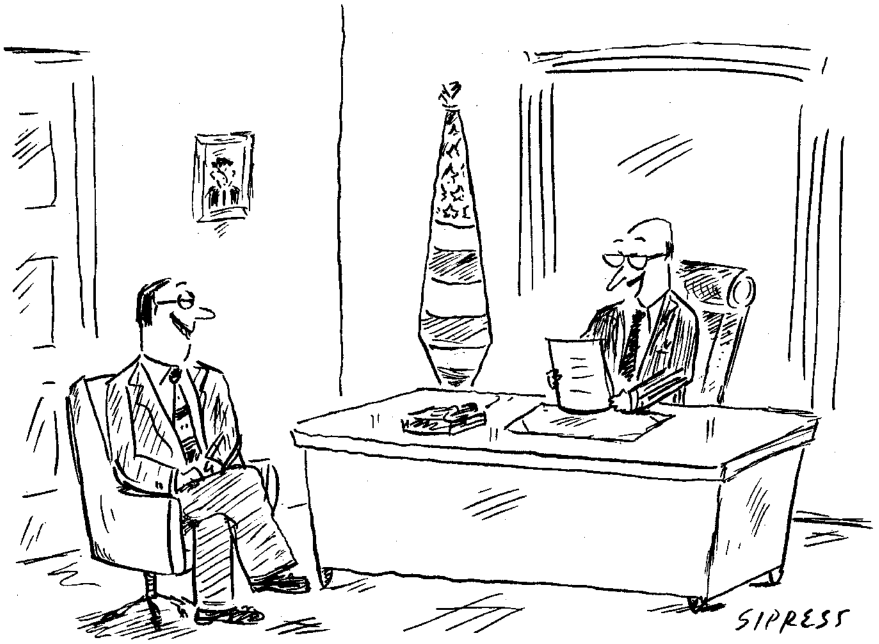
Paul Goldberger (The Sky Line, p. 180) is the dean of Parsons School of Design and the magazine's architecture critic. ♦



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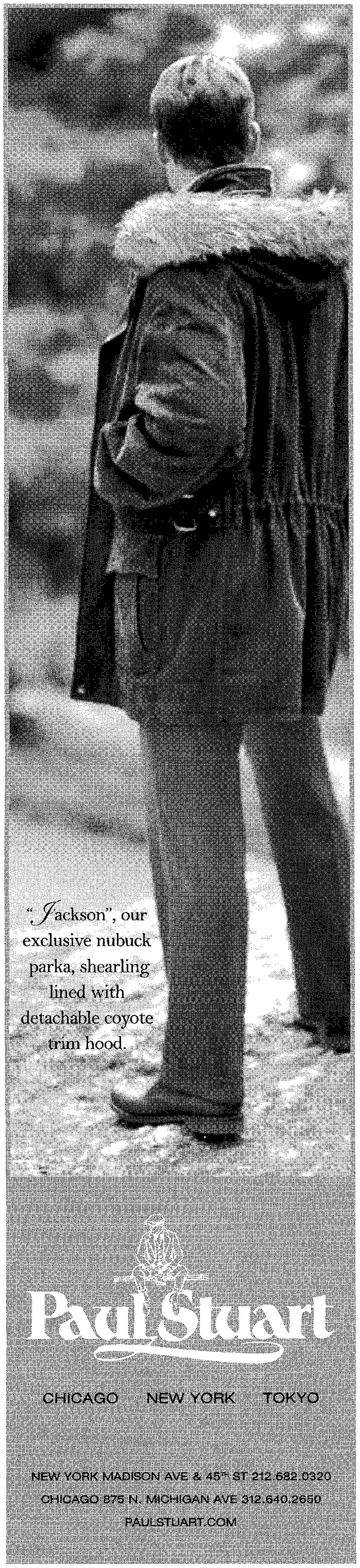
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THE MAIL

CELLULAR SOULS

Malcolm Gladwell shows that, within the friendly confines of Saddleback Church, Rick Warren has created a community in which ministers wear Hawaiian shirts and congregants aren't subjected to judgmental sermons from the mouths of self-righteous preachers ("The Cellular Church," September 12th). But it is important not to confuse laid-back theology with progressive theology, and Saddleback's hip environment effectively—perhaps strategically—camouflages a handful of principles that are old-fashioned at best, and discriminatory at worst. The church does not permit women to assume leadership roles without male supervision. (Warren's Web site pastors.com features a section, "Encouragement for the Pastor's Wife," that offers advice like "How to Affair-Proof Your Marriage.") Also, although Warren has done respectable work with the gay community to stem the spread of AIDS, and although he does not, as a rule, preach against homosexuality, Saddleback's "family" site says that "homosexuality is absolutely forbidden," and a keyword search for "homosexual" on pastors.com yields fifty-four hits, many of which are articles promoting the cause of "transforming" gays or opposing the expansion of their civil rights. Warren has said that "in looking at a hierarchy of evil . . . homosexuality is not the worst sin," and neither is he the worst religious leader in America today, but casual attire and after-church luaus can only do so much to soften a rigid, and regrettably exclusive, ideology.

Eliza Rubenstein
Costa Mesa, Calif.

Gladwell cites the opinion of Peter Drucker, the management guru, that Rick Warren's Saddleback Church has become an army, like the Jesuits. In fact, Warren and the Jesuits have more in common than Gladwell and Drucker suspect. What made the Jesuits so effective—and so sinister in the minds of some—was their brilliant use of small-group dynamics long before such things had a name. In Rome, nearly five hundred years ago, they brought together priests, prostitutes, and princes in prayer "sodalities" limited to only a few members. Mutual encouragement in matters temporal and spiritual was the hallmark of these groups, and the Jesuits duly congratulated themselves for being able to bring about the spiritual reformation of all segments of society. So successful were their prayer groups that the Jesuits established them in every school that they ran, from Mexico and Madrid to Macau. In the opinion of one recent historian, the cumulative impact of these groups from the mid-sixteenth until the mid-eighteenth century was nothing short of the "Christianization" of Europe.

Liam M. Brockey
Assistant Professor of History
Princeton University
Princeton, N.J.

Evangelicalism is far more ideologically unified than comes across in Gladwell's portrayal. Small groups may be "informal and personal," but they are also powerful instruments in promoting specific values and theological conformity. For example, one of the tenets of "small-group ministry" is to carefully select and train the leaders. Because the focus in most small-group programs is the Sunday-morning sermon, a pastor has enormous influence over a congregation. And while it is greatly to Rick Warren's credit that he has turned the focus of the Saddleback megachurch to poverty, few other Evangelical pastors have followed suit. Too many of them offer theological guarantees that a commitment to Jesus will result in success, financial advancement, and political power.

The Reverend Timothy Haley
Portland, Ore.

•

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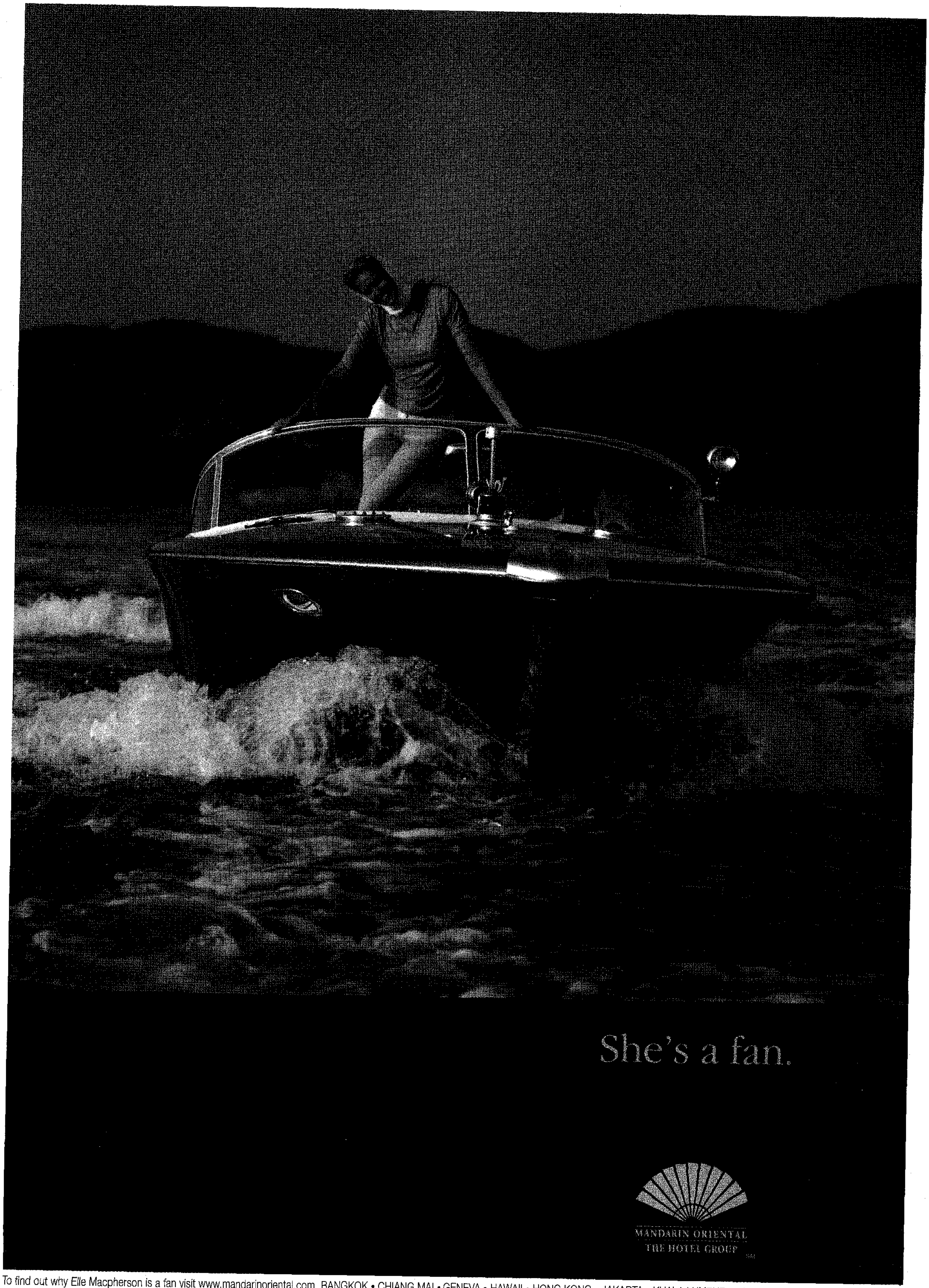

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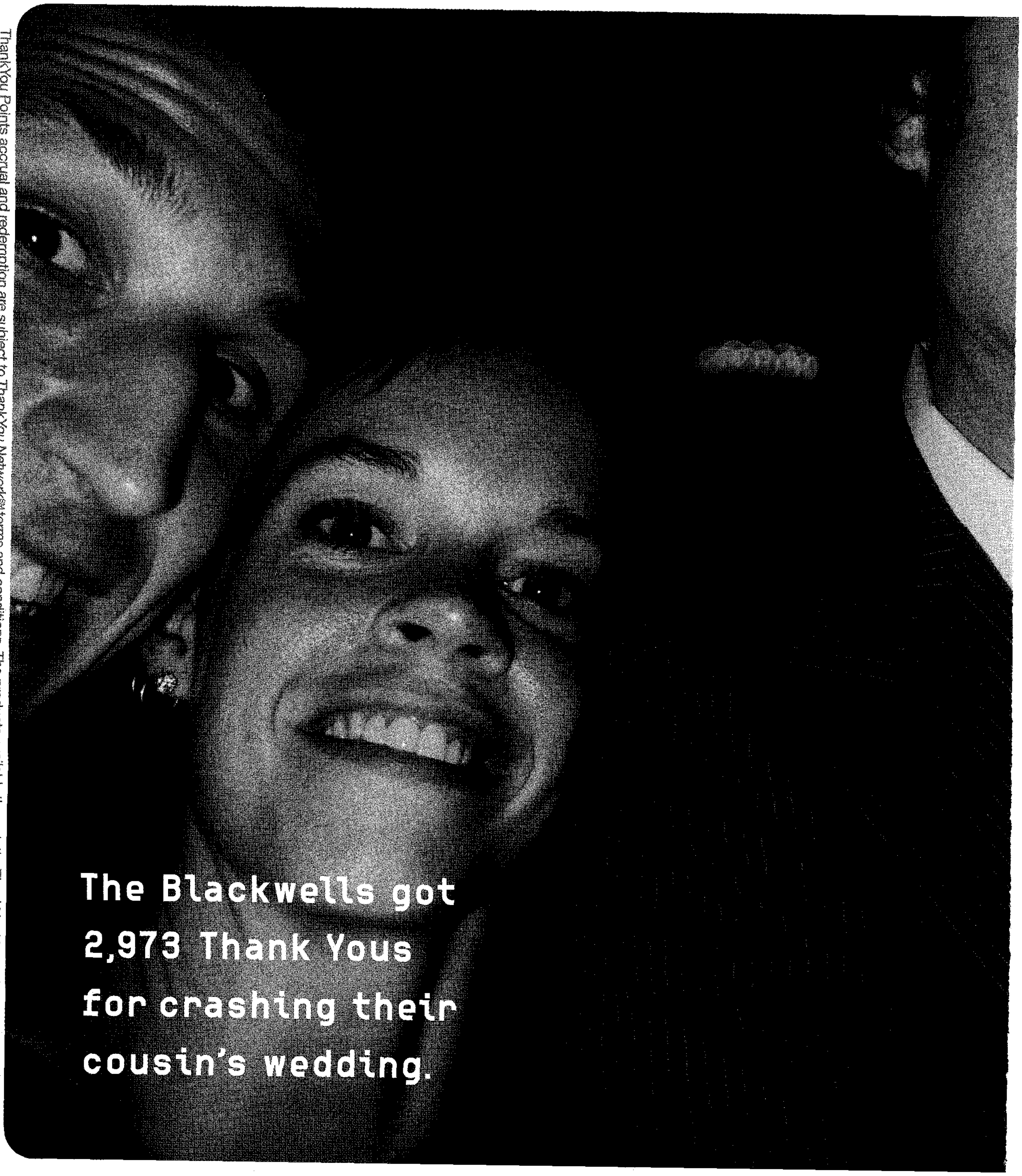

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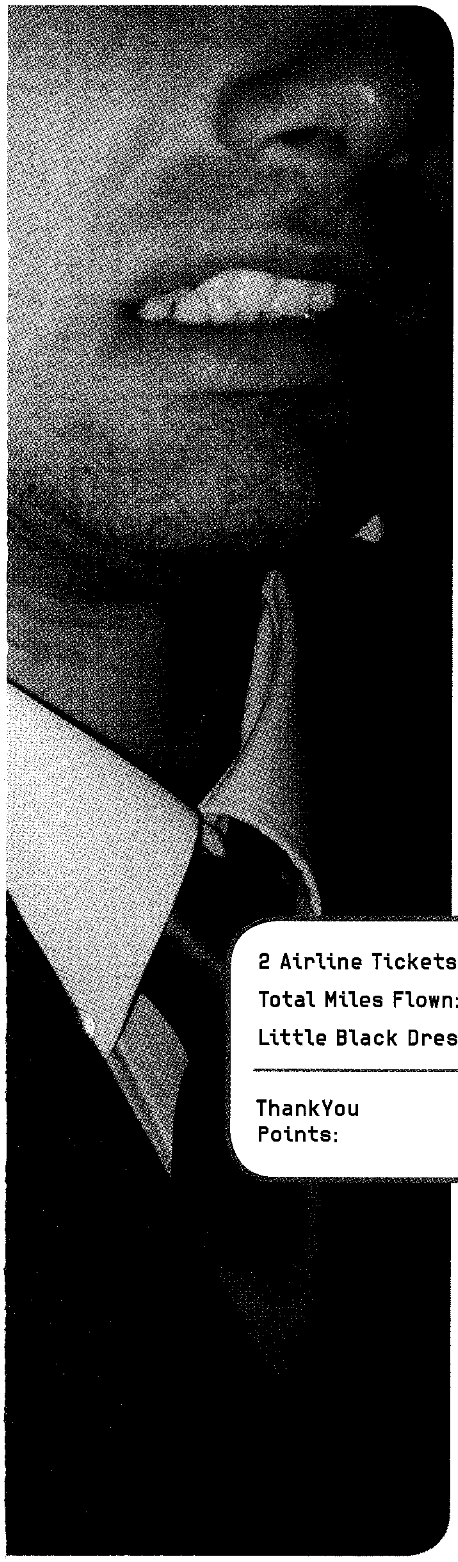

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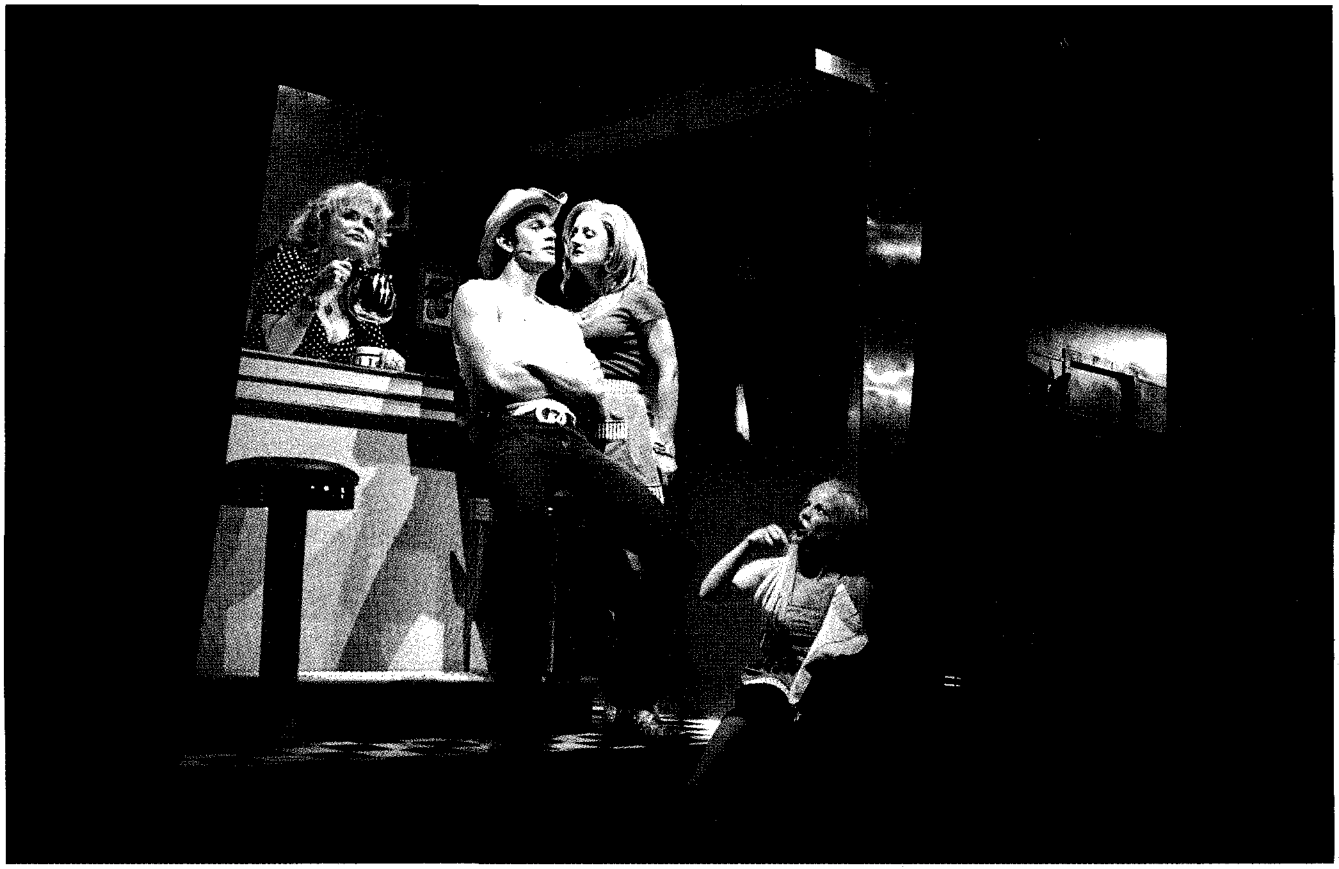

"The Great American Trailer Park Musical," now playing. Photograph by Sylvia Plachy.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
16	17	18	12	13	14	15

THIS WEEK

THE THEATRE
GUN SHOW

The Oscar winner Olympia Dukakis stars with Veanne Cox and George S. Irving in "A Mother, a Daughter and a Gun," a new comedy by Barra Grant. The production is directed by Jonathan Lynn, best known for his film work ("My Cousin Vinny," "The Whole Nine Yards"). (See page 22.)

NIGHT LIFE
THEY WILL ROCK YOU

The epically theatrical British rock band Queen hasn't toured since the death of its front man Freddie Mercury, in 1991. But mere issues of mortality can't keep a good band down, and the group's remaining members have recruited a new vocalist—Paul Rodgers, formerly of Bad Company and Free—to step into Mercury's shoes. The reinstated Queen is making only two stops in the United States, one of which is this week. (See page 25.)

ART
HANS MEMLING

"Memling's Portraits" opens at the Frick Collection this week with more than twenty serene, luminous images of the denizens of fifteenth-century Bruges as seen through the eyes of the Netherlandish master. The show runs through the end of the year. (See page 28.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
HELLO, CLEVELAND

The magisterial Cleveland Orchestra comes to Carnegie Hall nearly every year, usually for a series of concerts. This season, however, the orchestra offers only a single performance, with Franz Welser-Möst conducting music by Brahms (the First Symphony) and Chen Yi (the première of "Four Seasons"). (See page 38.)

MOVIES
DARK BEAUTY

Film Forum continues its revival of Robert Bresson's drama "Pickpocket" (1959) through Oct. 13 and on Oct. 14 begins a weeklong showing of Bresson's minimalist classic "Mouchette" (1967), about a tough fourteen-year-old girl who attempts to escape the loneliness and misery that surround her. (See page 45.)

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CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
BRAVODETS!

"I was sore at my whole life," Clifford Odets once said about his inspiration for "Awake and Sing!," the play that catapulted him to world renown. After the agitprop sensation of "Waiting for Lefty," Odets wrote five plays between 1935 and 1940—including "Rocket to the Moon," "Golden Boy," and "Paradise Lost"—and became the big, brave, brokenhearted voice of the thirties. With his centennial approaching—Odets was born on July 18, 1906, and died in 1963—he would be scandalized by the indifference to his work shown by the major American repertories. Odets is the link to Williams and to Mamet. His stylized fast talk—"Cut your throat, sweetheart. Save time"—and his lumpen lyricism are the first attempts to break the shackles of naturalism. With crackling authenticity, Odets introduced to our stage both a panoply of new types—"the American gallery," as he called it—and a new depth of discourse. Odets has an exemplary biography; he needs some exemplary productions. His craft is too fine, his vision of the republic's stalled blessing too important to be lost to us. Come on, artistic directors, reawaken Odets and let him sing!

—*John Lahr*

KIM DEMARCO

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

ABSURD PERSON SINGULAR
Alan Ayckbourn's triptych brings together three couples of different social classes on consecutive Christmas Eves. The Manhattan Theatre Club revival stars Mireille Enos, Clea Lewis, Sam Robards, Alan Ruck, Deborah Rush, and Paxton Whitehead. John Tillinger directs. In previews. Opens Oct. 18. (Biltmore, 261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

ASHLEY MONTANA GOES ASHORE IN THE CAICOS . . . OR WHAT AM I DOING HERE?
Roger Rosenblatt wrote and Jim Simpson directs this series of comical vignettes starring Bebe Neuwirth, Jenn Harris, Jeffrey DeMunn, and James Waterston. In previews. (The Flea, 41 White St. 212-352-3101.)

EMILIA GALOTTI
BAM's Next Wave Festival includes this Deutsches Theater Berlin production of the play by the German Enlightenment playwright Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, written in 1772, about a woman whose self-compromise leads to her downfall. Michael Thalheimer directs. In German with English supertitles. Oct. 12-15. (BAM Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100.)

FIVE COURSE LOVE
In a new musical comedy by Gregg Coffin, Heather Ayers, John Bolton, and Jeff Gurner play fifteen characters who go on five dates. In previews. Opens Oct. 16. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane. 212-307-4100.)

JERSEY BOYS
A new musical about how Frankie Valli and the other members of the Four Seasons came up from blue-collar roots to form the successful pop group. Directed by Des McAnuff, with music by Bob Gaudio, a book by Marshall Brickman and Rick Elice, and lyrics by Bob Crewe. In previews. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 212-239-6200.)

LATINOLOGUES
A collection of comic and thoughtful monologues about the Latino experience in America. Directed by Cheech Marin and written by Rick Najera. In previews. Opens Oct. 13. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

A MOTHER, A DAUGHTER AND A GUN
Olympia Dukakis, Veanne Cox, and George S. Irving star in a new comedy by Barra Grant, about the emotional relationship between mothers and daughters. Jonathan Lynn ("My Cousin Vinny") directs. Previews begin Oct. 15. (Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200.)

MURDER
Personal Space Theatrics presents the New York première of a play by the Israeli playwright Hanoch Levin, set amid an ongoing war, adapted and directed by Michael Weiselberg. Opens Oct. 15. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 212-352-3101.)

THE ODD COUPLE
Neil Simon's classic play stars Nathan Lane as the slovenly sportswriter Oscar Madison and Matthew Broderick as the fastidious photographer Felix Ungar. Joe Mantello directs. In previews. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 212-307-4100.)

SEE WHAT I WANNA SEE
A new musical by Michael John LaChiusa ("The Wild Party") at the Public, loosely based on the short stories of Ryunosuke Akutagawa, tells contemporary New York tales of loss and hope. The ensemble cast includes Idina Menzel, Mary Testa, Marc Kudisch, Aaron Lohr, and Henry Stram. Directed by Ted Sperling. In previews. (425 Lafayette St. 212-539-8500.)

A SOLDIER'S PLAY
Charles Fuller's Pulitzer Prize-winning drama from 1981, about a murder in a black battalion in Louisiana during the Second World War, receives its first major New York revival. Taye Diggs, Anthony Mackie, James McDaniel, and Steven Pasquale lead the cast. Jo Bonney directs. In previews. Opens Oct. 17. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

SWEENEY TODD
The innovatively staged revival of Stephen Sondheim's musical thriller from 1979 comes to Broadway by way of London. John Doyle's production stars Michael Cerveris ("Assassins") as the vengeful barber and Patti LuPone as his co-conspirator. In previews. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.)

THIRD
Wendy Wasserstein's new play, about a college professor who accuses a student of plagiarism, stars Dianne Wiest, Charles Durning, and Jason Ritter. Directed by Daniel Sullivan. In previews. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

NOW PLAYING

THE ASPHALT KISS
The Lord Strange Company presents the U.S. première of a tragicomic play by the Brazilian playwright Nelson Rodrigues, about a man whose life is upended by a tabloid journalist. (59E59 Theatres, 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

THE BLOWIN OF BAILE GALL
A construction worker named Eamon (Colin Hamell), who is renovating an old house in a small Irish town, has multiple axes to grind, and he involves his boss (George C. Heslin) and his co-workers in a non-stop whirlwind of invective, complaint, and prejudice. Life in this town—and throughout Ireland, we're meant to understand—is a struggle between the people who are "from here" and the "blowins." When the boss hires Laurence (the arresting Ato Essandoh), an illegal immigrant from Africa, to join the crew, the situation explodes. There's plenty of action in Ronan Noone's play, but not enough wit or subtlety, and the fight scenes are some of the most unconvincing ever staged. Directed by David Sullivan. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 212-868-4444.)

THE CATERERS
A new play by Jonathan Leaf, about two caterers and a screenwriter who become trapped in a terrorist plot. (Altered Stages, 212 W. 29th St. 212-868-4444.)

COLDER THAN HERE
In Laura Wade's new play (an MCC Theatre production, directed by Abigail Morris, at the Lucille Lortel), Myra (Judith Light) is a homemaker whose efficiency and sense of purpose are diminished but not derailed by terminal cancer. Playing the mother of two girls, Harriet and Jenna (Sarah Paulson and Lily Rabe), Light brings much to the role; we are on her side in a flash. And Paulson, who never ignores her character's deeper motives, is a moving and nuanced presence. However, by sticking to structural and intellectual conventions, Wade, a young English playwright, sells out her characters for cheap laughs and cloying sentimentality. Where she could have been brave, she has settled for being popular. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/10/05.) (121 Christopher St. 212-279-4200. Through Oct. 15.)

COP-OUT / THE TALKING DOG
Red Radar Productions presents two one-act plays written by John Guare ("Six Degrees of Separation"). "Cop-Out" is a satire of war and classic films, and "The Talking Dog," adapted from Chekhov's "A Joke," explores the relationship between two hang gliders. (Gene Frankel Theatre, 24 Bond St. 212-868-4444. Through Oct. 16.)

CYCLING PAST THE MATTERHORN
A trio of fine actresses animates Deborah Grimberg's pointed comedy about the ways in which the illnesses of mothers are visited upon their daughters. When Amy, a London palm reader (Carrie Preston), dodges taking responsibility for her needy, hypercritical mother (Shirley Knight), her tough aunt (Brenda Wehle) cracks the whip. The play is constructed as one very long guilt trip, but it's more fun than that, with antic staging and plenty of zingers, and more ambivalent, too—as its clumsy, uncertain conclusion proves. Eleanor Holdridge directs. (Clurman, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

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EINSTEIN'S GIFT
The U.S. première of a new work by Vern Thiessen, about the relationship between Albert Einstein and Fritz Haber, both of whom made discoveries that were instrumental in devising methods of mass destruction. (Acorn, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT
Gerard Alessandrini's long-running Broadway spoof has added a few new shows to its list of targets. While it's tricky to send up tongue-in-cheek musicals like "Avenue Q" and "Spamalot," Alessandrini finds easy prey in "The Light in the Piazza"—an earnest musical whose plot involves a pony kick to the head. Elsewhere, the revue takes aim at Christina Applegate's broken foot, Yoko Ono's opportunism, and the goyim in the cast of "Fiddler on the Roof." (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE GREAT AMERICAN TRAILER PARK MUSICAL
Joyful and unashamedly vulgar, Betsy Kelso's comic fable about women in a Florida trailer park and their no-account men is more fun than a chair-throwing episode of "Jerry Springer" set to music. When a stripper named Pippi (the incandescent Orfeh) moves into Armadillo Acres, on the run from a permanent-marker-sniffing loon named Duke, she gets sympathy from the park's ruling clique, Betty (Linda Hart, a bleached-blond Eartha Kitt with mighty lungs), Linoleum (Marya Grandy), and Pickles (the very funny Leslie Kritzer)—until she steals somebody's husband. The rousing songs, by David Nehls, include the ballad "I Gotta Make Like a Nail (and Press On)," which has the wattage of the disco hit "I Will Survive." And the ingenious set, by Derek McLane ("I Am My Own Wife"), belongs in an art gallery. (Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200.)

IN MY LIFE
A romance between a musician with Tourette's syndrome and an obsessive-compulsive journalist is the subject of this new musical written and directed by Joseph Brooks, the composer of the pop ballad "You Light Up My Life." (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE INTELLIGENT DESIGN OF JENNY CHOW
Set in the suburbs of L.A., Rolin Jones's play, at the Atlantic Theatre Company, could be a sci-fi sequel to "Fast Times at Ridgemont High." Its heroine, Jennifer Marcus (the agitated Julienne Hanzelka Kim), is twenty-two, lives at home, and has no friends besides the ones she meets on the Web (all played by the funny, versatile Remy Auberjonois) and a pizza-delivery boy (Ryan King, channelling Judge Reinhold in "Fast Times"). Poor Jennifer is also agoraphobic, obsessive-compulsive, and adopted. She builds a robot (the Jenny Chow of the title) that is supposed to fly to China and find her birth mother. Jennifer's tics and the over-stuffed plot threaten to overwhelm the story, but shrewd, quick direction by Jackson Gay keeps the mother-daughter-robot issues from bogging down, and Takeshi Kata's cunning set has more twists than a Rubik's Cube. (336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200. Through Oct. 15.)

IN THE CONTINUUM
A dramatization of the plight of African and African-American women whose lives are affected by H.I.V./AIDS comes to Primary Stages, in a play written and performed by Nikkole Salter and Danai Gurira. Robert O'Hara directs. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

IN THE WINGS
Set in the nineteen-seventies, Stewart F. Lane's play follows two struggling actors (Lisa Datz and Josh Prince) with dreams of stardom. One makes it big, in a musical called "I Married a Communist"; the other, not so much. Now and then, a nagging Jewish mother butts in on the proceedings. Lane, an accomplished Broadway producer, has managed to construct a script almost entirely out of clichés and noxious pluck. Directed by Jeremy Dobrish. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 212-239-6200.)

KISSING FIDEL
Eduardo Machado's cluttered new drama is set in a high-class Miami funeral parlor, where an irritable Cuban émigré family gathers to bicker and spit out its many dark secrets. But even a barrage of slaps, tears, denunciations, nudity, incestuous kisses, and tales of self-mutilation can barely jolt the play out of its underlying torpor. Michael John Garcés directs. (Kirk, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. Through Oct. 16.)

THE LADIES OF THE CORRIDOR
The Peccadillo Theatre Company revives the play by Dorothy Parker and Arnaud d'Usseau, about the goings on of several denizens of a New York City hotel. The cast includes Susan Jeffries, Jo Ann Cunningham, and Domenica Cameron-Scorsese. (East 13th Street Theatre, 136 E. 13th St. 212-279-4200.)

LATE FRAGMENT
Michael and Victoria Imperioli's production company, Studio Dante, presents a new play by Francine Volpe, about a man who escapes the September 11th World Trade Center attacks only to return home to his strained marriage and a reporter who tries to spin his story into a tale of heroism. (Studio Dante, 257 W. 29th St. 212-279-4200.)

MASSACRE (SING TO YOUR CHILDREN)
LAByrinth Theatre Company presents a production of a work in progress at the Public, written by José Rivera and directed by Kate Whoriskey, about residents of a New Hampshire town who revolt against a citizen who terrifies them. (425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

THE MASTER BUILDER
Ibsen's play about an architect with a heavy conscience comes to the Pearl, in a production directed by Shepard Sobel. (Reviewed in this issue.) (80 St. Marks Pl. 212-598-9802.)

MEDEA
In Alfred Preisser's adaptation of Euripides' tragedy, Medea (April Yvette Thompson) is a familiar type—the woman who claims to be staying in an abusive marriage because her children need a father. When her husband, Jason (Lawrence Winslow, a large, sculpted presence), leaves her for a princess, the childishly petulant Medea cannot, despite Jason's pleas, be reasonable. Preisser has staged the work with brio: the actors are used to great visual effect, and the supporting cast is gifted. Nevertheless, his adaptation seems undeveloped. Instead of getting to the dark heart of the tragedy, Preisser worries too much about preserving the play's classicism. (10/3/05) (H.S.A. Theatre, 645 St. Nicholas Ave., near 141st St. 212-868-4444.)

MIRACLE BROTHERS
Kirsten Childs's sparkling new musical is a delight. Set in a lush green jungle, it follows two river dolphins, who leave the spirit world to be incarnated as human boys on a plantation in seventeenth-century colonial Brazil. One brother (Clifton Oliver) is born to a black slave, the other (Tyler Maynard) to the white mistress—though both are fathered by the master (Jay Goede). As murder and betrayal divide the boys and they search for refuge, a swirl of dashing choreography (by Mark Dendy) and stirring songwriting (by Childs) carries us from scene to scene, making the journey a pleasure every step of the way. Directed by Tina Landau. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 212-353-0303. Through Oct. 16.)

A NAKED GIRL ON THE APPIAN WAY
Richard Thomas and Jill Clayburgh star in a new comic drama by Richard Greenberg ("Take Me Out"), about parents whose lives are disrupted when their grown children return from a year abroad with surprising news. (Reviewed in this issue.) (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300.)

NO FOREIGNERS BEYOND THIS POINT
In an engrossing new play by Warren Leight, produced by the Ma-Yi Theatre Company, two East Coast liberals (Abby Royle and Ean Sheehy) arrive in China in 1980 to teach English, and discover a country that is still reeling from the Cultural Revolution and ambivalent toward Westerners. As the Americans attempt to understand the conflicted lives of their Chinese hosts, they find themselves in a world of secrecy and surveillance. Leight, who based the play on his own experiences abroad, draws a complicated picture of a wounded society, and Loy Arcenas's direction is feverish and layered. (Culture Project, 45 Bleecker St. 212-352-3101. Through Oct. 16.)

ONE-MAN STAR WARS TRILOGY
In this inspired act of madness, the Canadian actor Charles Ross recaps "Star Wars," "The Empire Strikes Back," and "The Return of the Jedi" in a single hour, portraying every character and even the floating words in the films' opening credits. (Lamb's Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE PAVILION
Two former sweethearts confront their regrets at a high-school reunion, in a drama by Craig Wright ("Orange Flower Water"), presented by the Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre. As the pair, played by Brian D'Arcy James and Tasha Lawrence, sort through their ugly past, a narrator (Stephen Bogardus) delivers sprawling soliloquies that cast a metaphysical light on the action. The play, with its quirky blend of the intimate and the ontological, doesn't quite work, but Wright has a flair for pithy dialogue and offhand lyricism. Directed by Lucie Tiberghien. (224 Waverly Pl. 212-868-4444.)

POOR THEATER
The show—or, rather, the experience—is performed by four veteran members of the Wooster Group, Kate Valk, Ari Fliakos, Sheena See, and Scott Shepherd, and is divided into three parts, each dedicated special influence: the late, hugely influential dir Jerzy Grotowski, the avant-garde choreographer liam Forsythe, and the artist Max Ernst. The first recounts the Group's visit to Grotowski's Labora Theatre, in Poland, and Grotowski's method for ating what he called a "poor theatre"—a theatre lacks costuming, artifice, and "hybrid-spectacles which the actor tears down the wall between ence and performer. If "Poor Theater" is about thing, it is about love—the love of performance— about having the courage to make a fool of you while declaring it. (10/3/05) (Performing Garag Wooster St. 212-868-4444. Through Oct. 14.)

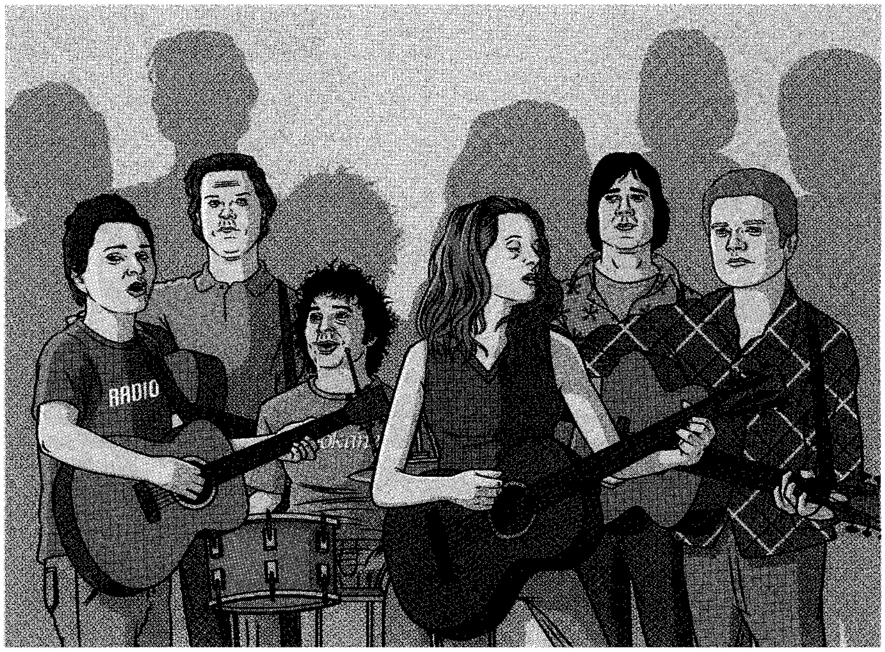
PUPU PLATTER
One of the more inspiring things about New theatre, of course, is that one can find fresh each season, not only on the Great White Way also in the most unexpected places. Every day night at the Starlight Bar Lounge, the up-coming writer-performer Mike Albo, along w number of rising stars—John Roberts, Gina Michele Brilliant, and Sandra Bauleo—perf topical monologues or sketches on subjects ing from growing up queer to the mess in Orleans. What's really remarkable about the s is its lack of cynicism, and the excellent d skills of Pete(y), who contributes to the fine " put on a show!" spirit of the thing. (167 Av 212-475-2172.)

SLUT
This musical about sex and drinking in the East lage was a hit at the New York International F Festival. With a book and lyrics by Ben A. H. ters and music by Stephen Sislen. Directed by don Greenberg. (A.T.A. Theatre, 314 W. 54t 212-239-6200.)

WALKING DOWN BROADWAY
Seven decades before "Sex and the City," Got newcomers Marge (the winsome Christine Albr and Elsie (giddily portrayed by Amanda Jones) sashaying down Riverside Drive, their eyes p for eligible beaux. In this hitherto unproduced written by Dawn Powell in 1931, the girls manage to land übër-capitalists; instead they up with two young salesmen who are just as as they are to taste the city's pleasures, and t cape the loneliness of its hollow promises. Pov play has some predictable plot twists, but it's rather charming, and the Mint has done well to earth it now. Steven Williford directs. (311 W. St. 212-315-0231.)

Also Playing

ALTAR BOYZ: Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50t 212-239-6200. **AVENUE Q:** Golden, 252 W. 45 212-239-6200. **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 212-307-4747. **CHICA** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **CH** **CHITTY BANG BANG:** Hilton, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. **DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS:** Imp 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **DOUBT:** Walter 219 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200. **DRUMSTRUCK:** Do Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200. **FIDDLER THE ROOF:** Minskoff, 200 W. 45th St. 212- 4100. **FOOLS IN LOVE:** Manhattan Ensemble atre, 55 Mercer St. 212-239-6200. **HAIRSPRAY:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100. **THE LIGHT IN THE PIAZZA:** Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200. **MAMMA MIA!:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 212-239-6200. **MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **MOVIN' OUT:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 212-307-4100. **ORSON'S SHADOW:** Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 212-239-6200. **SWEET CHARITY:** Al Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **THOM PAIN (BASED ON NOTHING):** DR2, 103 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200. **THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE:** Circle in the Square, 50th St. between Broadway and Eighth Ave. 212-239-6200. **WICKED:** Gershwin, 222 W. 51st St. 212-307-4100.



The Vancouver indie-rock ensemble the New Pornographers, at Webster Hall.

NIGHT LIFE
ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BARBÈS
376 9th St., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-965-9177)—Oct. 15: **Howard Fishman,** a Connecticut native who spent his musically formative years in New Orleans, is a gravelly-voiced singer and guitarist; his interests range from small-group jazz to indie rock.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Oct. 13: The seductive singer **Amel Larrieux** has graced the top of the R. & B. charts as half of the group Groove Theory and has got down and dirty with the Philadelphia rap conglomerate the Roots. Oct. 14: The soul legends **Booker T. & the MGs** started off as the house band for the Memphis label Stax, backing up artists like Otis Redding and Wilson Pickett before scoring instrumental hits of their own like "Green Onions" and "Hip Hug-Her." The group even recorded an all-instrumental version of the Beatles' "Abbey Road" called "McLemore Avenue," after a Memphis street. Film buffs might recognize the guitarist Steve Cropper and the bassist Donald (Duck) Dunn from their roles in the Blues Brothers films, but they've also had a long, storied career both on their own and backing such artists as Neil Young. Oct. 15: Florida's **Outlaws** are Southern-rock titans in the league of Lynyrd Skynyrd and the Allman Brothers. Oct. 16: The pounding drum machines, flat vocals, and ever-present synthesizers of the Omaha group the **Faint** revive the New Wave sound of the early eighties with a dark vengeance. Oct. 18: The guitarist and singer **Junior Brown** is capable of switching from rapid-fire chicken pickin' to delicate slide work in the course of a single bar. His songs favor heartbreak, hillbillies, and fools.

BEACON THEATRE
Broadway at 74th St. (212-307-7171)—Oct. 18-19: **Rob Thomas** fronted the popular rock band Matchbox Twenty, but on his own, he's a far more eclectic performer. His début album, "Something to Be," branches out beyond guitar-based pop into slick R. & B.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—Oct. 12: **Jonathan Richman** has spent the past thirty years turning whimsy into an art form, first with his band the Modern Lovers and then on his own. Several of Richman's songs are already in the rock canon, including the immortal driving song "Roadrunner," and his latest record, "Not So Much to Be Loved as to Love," finds him returning to the well once more, with generally cheerful and idiosyncratic results: parts of the album are sung in French, Spanish, and Italian. Oct. 14: **Lambchop,** led by the singer, songwriter, and guitarist Kurt Wagner, is big; membership has been as high as twenty. Lambchop is also prolific; last year they released two records, "Aw C'mon" and "No You C'mon." And Lambchop is eclectic: while its best-known albums are full of string-drenched countrypolitan arrangements and Curtis Mayfield-inflected soul, they have also sometimes opted for a stripped-down, almost ghostly sound. Oct. 15-16: **Dungen,** the brainchild of a precocious multi-instrumentalist named Gustav Ejstes, is a Swedish outfit specializing in eclectic psychedelic rock. The soaring arrangements, epic reach, and indecipherable lyrics could easily make them the new Sigur Rós. Oct. 17: The **Dirty Three,** an Australian guitar-violin-drum trio. They've made a career out of intense and often melancholy instrumental music, but their new release, "Cinder," includes the vocalists Sally Timms and Chan Marshall, otherwise known as Cat Power.

BOWERY POETRY CLUB
308 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (212-614-0505)—Oct. 14: **Gods and Monsters** is the rock outlet for the maverick ex-Captain Beefheart guitarist Gary Lucas. While the ever-shifting ensemble has featured such names as Matthew Sweet and the late Jeff Buckley (Lucas co-wrote his hit "Grace"), the current incarnation includes the former Television drummer, Billy Ficca, and the onetime Modern Lovers bassist, Ernie Brooks, making the band an underground-rock fan's dream team.

CARNEGIE HALL
57th St. at Seventh Ave. (212-247-7800)—Oct. 13: The transgendered torch singer **Antony,** here with his band the Johnsons, is usually found at downtown clubs, and his fans include Lou Reed and Rufus Wainwright. He recently won England's Mercury Prize for his album "I Am a Bird Now." He's joined by the jazz vocalist **Jimmy Scott.**

CONTINENTAL AIRLINES ARENA
The Meadowlands, East Rutherford, N.J. (212-307-7171)—Oct. 12: The Canadian pop singer **Bryan Adams** and the British heavy-metal act **Def Leppard** might seem like an odd double bill, but they have a common link in the super-producer Robert (Mutt) Lange, who helped turn both acts into mainstream radio stalwarts with his knack for hook-heavy studio polish. Oct. 13: The New Jersey pop-punk band **My Chemical Romance** steep themselves in the sartorial trappings of suburban mall rats and are about to be immortalized in an action-figure set, but their hook-laden tunes, self-deprecating sense of humor, and lung-straining choruses redeem the juvenilia. Oct. 14: A double bill of nineties alt-rock survivors, with the **Foo Fighters** and **Weezer.** The Canadian neo-New Wavers the **Hot Hot Heat** open. Oct. 16: The flamboyant British juggernaut **Queen,** an answered prayer to some and a travesty to others, returns to the stage with Paul Rodgers, the former Free and Bad Company vocalist, attempting to channel Freddie Mercury. While it will certainly be a rapturous treat to hear Brian May's singularly elaborate guitar trill again, how Rodgers plans to replicate Mercury's soaring vocals and remarkable stage presence remains a point of much speculation.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—Oct. 16: The **Frames,** an impassioned rock band from Dublin, Ireland, have a catalogue of arena-ready anthems. Oct. 17-18: Two years ago **Liz Phair** upset indie-rock purists when she called upon seasoned hitmakers to produce her self-titled album. Her new release, "Somebody's Miracle," finds her back on familiar ground, at least conceptually; the album allegedly came into being as a song-by-song response to Stevie Wonder's landmark work "Songs in the Key of Life" a tactic that echoes Phair's much fêted début, "Exile in Guyville," which was a retort to the Rolling Stones' "Exile on Main Street."

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—Oct. 13-15: The **Loser's Lounge,** a loose collection of downtown musicians led by the cultural archeologist and keyboard player Joe McGinty, sifts through the work of Stevie Wonder. Oct. 17: **Stew,** a raconteur and singer on leave from his Los Angeles power-pop outfit the Negro Problem, writes sophisticated songs that echo Cole Porter, Burt Bacharach, and Randy Newman. He delivers his carefully detailed narratives in a hushed tone that quickly makes you feel like an insider in his "AfroBaroque" world. Oct. 18: The Texas-bred troubadour **Jimmie Dale Gilmore.**

SATALLA
37 W. 26th St. (212-576-1155)—Oct. 14: A family of musicians, the **Nields** make clever songs full of sweet harmonizing that strive to make the leap from folk to rock. Later on Oct. 14: The Guinean kora master **Prince Diabaté** updates griot music for Westerners without diminishing its traditional power.

SOUTHPAW
125 Fifth Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-230-0236)—Oct. 14: The **Waco Brothers,** who mix punk and country with unexpectedly wholesome results, are touring with their Bloodshot labelmates **Sally Timms, Jon Langford,** and **Dollar Store.**

TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (212-358-7503)—Oct. 12: **CocoRosie.** Sierra and Bianca Casady, the two sisters at the heart of this local outfit, share the raw

MICHAEL WELDON

vocal style of certain early female blues singers. They have a Continental flair (their first album was titled "La Maison de Mon Rêve"), and they favor dreamy arrangements and sparse accompaniment; often it's just a bit of guitar or piano and such unlikely instruments as gold-chain belts, along with the sound of cats meowing or roosters crowing. With the singer **Diane Cluck**, who, along with Antony (see Carnegie Hall), Devendra Banhart, and other members of the downtown music scene, contributed to CocoRosie's new album, "Noah's Ark." Oct. 14: **Burnt Sugar,** the expansive improvisational ensemble conducted by the music journalist Greg Tate, plays at midnight. Oct. 15: **Elysian Fields**, featuring the guitarist Oren Bloedow and the sultry chanteuse Jennifer Charles, traffics in exceptionally languid, sensuous music.

THEATRE AT MADISON SQUARE GARDEN
Seventh Ave. at 33rd St. (212-307-7171)—Oct. 17: **Franz Ferdinand.** According to Alex Kapranos, the front man for this much favored, highly clever post-punk band from Scotland, the band first came together to make music for girls to dance to. Last year their self-titled début album did just that, with its jerky guitar-based songs. Their new album, "You Could Have It So Much Better," continues in a similar vein, although it is heavily produced and weighty; Kapranos has called the new effort "music for girls to cry to."

TOWN HALL
123 W. 43rd St. (212-840-2824)—Oct. 14: The eclectic, prolific brother-sister indie-rock band the **Fiery Furnaces** topped critics' lists nationwide with its last album, "Blueberry Boat." For a follow-up, the band—Matthew and Eleanor Friedberger—is releasing two albums in quick succession, the first of which is "Rehearsing My Choir," a strange and sprawling concept album with major vocal support by the Friedbergers' grandmother Olga Sarantos.

WEBSTER HALL
125 E. 11th St. (212-353-1600)—Oct. 12-13: Fans of the **New Pornographers'** albums, "Electric Version," "Mass Romantic," and the new "Twin Cinema," might be puzzled by the Canadian group's live performance. Onstage, the band members can seem a bit bewildered, the harmonies slightly off, the melodies painfully twee. That is, until Neko Case stops staring at her feet and wrests control of the microphone. Suddenly the Pornographers' most brilliant decision—casting the alt-country siren as a pop vocalist—becomes clear. When Case hits the upper regions of her register, she transforms preciousness into pop perfection. Oct. 18: The Louisville ensemble **My Morning Jacket** churns out shaggy Southern rock. With the singer-songwriter **Kathleen Edwards.**

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—Oct. 11-Nov. 5: **Paula West.** With each East Coast visit, this San Francisco-based singer reminds us how peaceably jazz and cabaret can co-exist when fused by a sensitive and technically assured artist. West can drive a band hard, or gently reveal the emotional heart of a ballad.

BARBÈS
376 9th St., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-965-9177)—Oct. 13: Post-boomer jazz guitarists have the unenviable task of finding something to say that Metheny, Scofield, and Frisell haven't already expressed. **Ben Monder,** who has been playing new jazz for decades, faces the challenge head on. Oct. 14: The washboard swing of the **4th St. Niteowls,** a combo from Hoboken. Oct. 18: The violinist **Jenny Scheinman.** You've heard her playing on Norah Jones's hit record "Come Away with Me," but this ambitious composer and performer samples a larger variety of the world's music when she's on her own. Sundays: The French guitarist **Stephane Wrembel** channels the hot jazz of Django Reinhardt.

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—Oct. 19-22: The **Pat Martino** quartet. The guitarist Martino has won the admiration of three generations of jazz fretmen. He knows how to transform knowledge, technique, and ideas into genuine music—a notion lost on most guitarists.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Oct. 11-14: **Eldar.** Anything you can play he can play faster. This teen-age piano marvel from the former Soviet Union is an astonishing if thoroughly exhausting virtuoso who has yet to consider the idea that less can be more. Oct. 15-16: While his modernist jazz cornet playing first brought **Olu Dara** fame, this Mississippi-born urban troubadour has added blues-based vocals and original songs to even greater effect.

CARLYLE HOTEL
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wrap-around murals, and, through Oct. 29, the Broadway veteran **Elaine Stritch.**

DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA
Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—Oct. 11-16: **Manhattan Trinity,** an ad-hoc trio with the potential to sound like a million bucks, features the pianist **Cyrus Chestnut,** the bassist **George Mraz,** and the drummer **Lewis Nash.**

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—**Roy Haynes,** an octogenarian drummer who can play circles around percussionists half his age, is a living link to the bebop era and a musician in continual evolution. He's here with his band Oct. 12-16. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.** The **Mingus Big Band** takes over on Tuesdays.

JAZZ GALLERY
290 Hudson St., near Spring St. (212-242-1063)—Oct. 14-15: The Chilean vocalist **Claudia Acuña** refracts standards and Latin material through a contemporary prism.

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Oct. 11-13: **Billy Hart,** a first-call drummer since the mid-sixties, leads his own quartet. It's stocked with exceptional talent, notably the saxophonist **Mark Turner** and the pianist **Ethan Iverson,** of Bad Plus Trio fame. Oct. 14-16: **Trio da Paz.** The guitarist Romero Lubambo, the bassist Nilson Matt, and the drummer Duduka da Fonseca are eclectics at heart—their repertoire includes Miles Davis and Dave Brubeck classics, Broadway standards, and bossa-nova tunes.

NEW YORK CABARET CONVENTION
The Mabel Mercer Foundation celebrates its twentieth anniversary in new digs, Jazz at Lincoln Center's Rose Theatre. The bill of fare includes an appearance by **Barbara Carroll,** who will be honored by **Ann Hampton Callaway,** and many others (Oct. 18); a night of Jerry Herman material (the tickets for which are going for a song, just $20, on Oct. 21); and a hundredth-birthday party for Dorothy Fields, Harold Arlen, and Jule Styne (Oct. 22). (Broadway at 60th St. 212-721-6500. For more information, visit www.mabelmercer.org.)

SWEET RHYTHM
88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (212-255-3626)—Oct. 14-15: **Jimmy Cobb's** Mob. The sole surviving member of Miles Davis's "Kind of Blue" recording session, the drummer Cobb has honed a topnotch hard-bop unit that spotlights the commanding soloists **Craig Handy** on saxophone and **George Colligan** on piano.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Through Oct. 16: The pianist **Bill Charlap** and his trio deliver impeccable swing and have a delicious way with standards. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—The city built by Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV as "the dream of delirious architects" to rival Paris and Rome lends treasures from its heyday in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. **"Prague: The Crown of Bohemia, 1347-1437"** is populated with many apple-cheeked Madonnas, who share gallery space with illuminated books, brocaded tapestries, amethyst vessels, rock-crystal reliquaries, and stone statuary from Karlstejn Castle and St. Vitus Cathedral. Look, too, for an ingenious book of artist's studies, an unfolding series of inch-square

TABLES FOR TWO
TIDES

102 Norfolk St. (212-254-8855)—Tides may seem like just another symptom of the Lower East Side's loss of local color, with its sleekly elegant interior and sophisticated seafood. But Steven Yee, a co-owner with Allen Leung and the chef, Judy Seto, is a longtime L.E.S. resident, and he considers the two-month-old spot part of a tradition of home-grown joints. At the end of the evening on a busy Friday night, Yee, who is garrulous and sociable, had settled at a table next to a lingering pair of diners. "We're also opening a hot-dog place just around the corner," he said. "I live in the area, and when it's late at night and you're hungry there's only pizza and McDonald's."

Tides seeks a more discerning audience. The tiny room, which seats twenty-two, has a ceiling made up of more than a hundred and twenty thousand bamboo skewers arranged in an undulating pattern, and two booths are set into the wall at different heights, like a receding wave. A short but smartly curated wine list will change seasonally, along with the menu, which recently featured crispy and tender fried calamari and a sweet, rich corn pudding. The whole fish of the day was excellent: on one evening, a grilled striped sea bass, infused with rosemary and sage, and, on another visit, a golden, deep-fried tilapia. The lobster roll had a few weaknesses, like a too-thin sauce and a side of cold (though still tasty) sweet-potato fries. But its dill seasoning was refreshing, and the proportion of lobster to roll perfect. Even this staple of fish shacks alters to fit the weather: the dill has now made way for tarragon and cucumber, which will in turn cede to saffron-basil in the winter months.

The desserts, a tart key-lime bar and a surprisingly light espresso brownie, are fine but mostly serve as an excuse to hang about the place for a few more minutes. The exceedingly friendly waitress might top off a drained glass of wine, and tables of strangers start chatting. As the hour gets later and the line outside dwindles away, Tides turns into a cozy little social club that any neighborhood could love. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays for dinner. Entrées $15-$23.)

—*Andrea Thompson*

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thumbnail sketches depicting everything from innocent babes and hoary old men to rams, boars, and spiders. Through Jan. 3. ♦ **"The Perfect Medium: Photography and the Occult."** Through Dec. 31. ♦ **"Sol LeWitt on the Roof: Splotches, Whirls, and Twirls."** A warm-weather installation in the roof garden, featuring five spiky stalagmite sculptures and a wall drawing. Through Oct. 30. ♦ From scorpions and crocodiles to the risks attendant upon childbirth, battle, and large-scale construction projects, life in the pharaonic Nile Delta could be dangerous. **"The Art of Medicine in Ancient Egypt"** collects vessels, amulets, hieroglyphic carvings, magic knives made from hippo ivory for cutting umbilical cords, tiny pots for prophylactic eye makeup, and a text known as the Edwin Smith Papyrus—a black-and-red-inked treatise on spells, prescriptions, and the treatment of wounds that is one of the world's oldest surviving scientific documents. Through Jan. 15. ♦ The Costume Institute presents **"Rara Avis: Selections from the Iris Barrel Apfel Collection."** Through Jan. 22. ♦ What is beguiling and perhaps surprising in **"Cameo Appearances,"** an assortment of small carved-stone items drawn from the Met's world-class collection, is the exactitude of the likenesses achieved. With examples dating from the Roman Empire through the Renaissance (a sleeping shepherdess with her flock) and on to the nineteenth century (Admiral Nelson in beaky profile), this lapidary little show also explains the difference between cameos (raised reliefs) and intaglios (incised engravings). Through Jan. 29. ♦ **"The Armored Horse in Europe, 1480-1620"** is a one-room show of leather and metal examples from the golden age of the obsolete craft of horse armor. Items range from brutally practical sets made for low-ranking soldiers to more fanciful designs displayed by kings in military parades. Through Jan. 15. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—**"Stillness: Michael Snow/Sam Taylor Wood,"** a small show of intimately scaled photographs and video works. Through Nov. 28. ♦ **"The High Line"** details Field Operations and Diller Scofidio & Renfro's ambitious urban rails-to-trails scheme for the abandoned elevated tracks that run along the West Side from Gansevoort Street to Thirty-fourth Street. Through Oct. 31. ♦ **"SAFE: Design Takes on Risk."** Opens Oct. 16. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—The sprawling exhibition **"Russia!"** includes most everything you might think could fit under that rubric: gilt religious icons dating from the Middle Ages, Renaissance-era Western European paintings from imperial collections, romanticized portraits of peasant life, socialist-realist propaganda, early modernist masterworks from the collections of industrialists, videos made just this year. Many of the items have not left Russia in centuries, or even ever; pieces like Malevich's "Black Square" (which usually lives at the Hermitage), Vasily Perov's portrait of Dostoyevsky (the only one painted in the writer's lifetime), and a fifteenth-century icon made by Andrei Rublev will be entirely new to most American eyes. Through Jan. 11. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Madison Ave. at 75th St. (800-944-8639)—The retrospective **"Oscar Bluemner: A Passion for Color"** aims to reposition the artist (1867-1938) as a major figure in the development of twentieth-century art. The work here ranges from the architectural drawings of his first career to his later color-saturated symbolic landscapes. Through Feb. 12. ♦ Drawings and a new animation piece are on view in **"Raymond Pettibon."** Through Feb. 19. ♦ **"Robert Smithson,"** a retrospective of drawings, constructions, and collages, includes filmed, photographed, and sketched documentation of the iconic "Spiral Jetty." Through Oct. 23. ♦ **"Building and Breaking the Grid, 1962-2002."** Through Jan. 8. ♦ **"Still Life: A Vital Theme"** uses works from the permanent collection to explore the still-life tradition in the twentieth century. Through Jan. 15. ♦ **"The New City: Sub/Urbia in Recent Photography."** Through Jan. 15. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM AT ALTRIA

120 Park Ave., at 42nd St. (917-663-2453)—**"Past Presence: Childhood and Memory"** is a slight but intriguing show about childish urges and experiences, with work by Charles LeDray, Gary Simmons, Robert Beck, Peggy Preheim. Through Oct. 13. (Open Mondays through Fridays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 7:30.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Central Park W. at 79th St. (212-769-5100)—**"Dinosaurs: Ancient Fossils, New Discoveries,"** a review of recent developments in the study of dinosaurs, provides insight into how the animals moved through their world. Biomechanics has answered questions about how fast dinosaurs could move and about how they balanced their multiton bodies on two legs; videos and a six-foot animatronic T. rex skeleton demonstrate what's been learned. A diorama of the Liaoning Forest in China replicates Mesozoic conditions, and other stations explain new ideas about dinosaurs' relationships to modern birds, herding behavior, and possible reasons for their abrupt extinction. Through Jan. 8. ♦ **"The Butterfly Conservatory: Tropical Butterflies Alive in Winter"** is back for an eighth year. Through May 29. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART

200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—**"Manufactured Landscapes,"** a retrospective of the peripatetic Canadian photographer Edward Burtynsky's large-scale pictures of marble quarries, shipyards, and oil fields. Through Jan. 15. ♦ Old-fashioned museological Egyptology meets state-of-the-art, user-friendly installation in the permanent exhibition **"Egypt Reborn."** The sunny, spacious galleries present thousands of objects, tracing an evolution from the pre-dynastic period in 3500 B.C. to the era of Roman influence. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM

45 W. 53rd St. (212-265-1040)—An international quintet of self-taught artists have work on view in **"Obsessive Drawing."** Through March 19. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10:30 to 5:30, and until 7:30 on Fridays.)

ASIA SOCIETY

Park Ave. at 70th St. (212-288-6400)—Recent work by Dinh Q. Lê is presented in **"Vietnam: Destination for the New Millennium."** Through Jan. 15. ♦ **"Images of the Divine: South and Southeast Asian Sculpture from the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection"** gathers a small but lovely assortment of stone and cast-metal statuary from all over the continent. Through Jan. 8. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Friday evenings until 9.)

COOPER-HEWITT NATIONAL DESIGN MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 91st St. (212-849-8300)—**"Extreme Textiles: Designing for High Performance"** is a thrilling show, quick to stoke imagination and amazement. The samples of technological innovation include wing suits for skydivers, fast-deploying webs for riot control, and the Tumbleweed, a giant computerized beach ball that follows the wind on Mars, periodically deflating to collect data. Through Oct. 30. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10 to 5, Fridays, 10 to 9, Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, noon to 6.)

FRICK COLLECTION

1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700)—Some one hundred paintings by the Netherlandish artist Hans Memling (ca. 1435-94) survive; of the thirty portraits, more than twenty are coming to the Frick for the exhibition **"Memling's Portraits."** Opens Oct. 12. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GROLIER CLUB

47 E. 60th St. (212-838-6690)—**"No Other Appetite: Sylvia Plath, Ted Hughes, and the Blood Jet of Poetry."** Through Nov. 19. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY

1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. (212-857-0000)—Even if André Kertész's name doesn't evoke a flash of recognition, his photographs surely will. Over the course of a career that began (circa 1920) in Budapest, flowered in Paris, and floundered in New York before his late-life triumph here in the nineteen-sixties, Kertész made a number of images that have become icons of modernism. Sarah Greenough's exhibition locates these greatest hits—"Satiric Dancer," "Chez Mondrian," "Washington Square"—in the broader context of Kertész's sixty-year output, and allows us to follow—often through rare, tiny vintage prints—the development of a visual language that valued poetry as much as precision. Through Nov. 27. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 6, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

JEWISH MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (212-423-3200)—**Joan Snyder** has spent a career navigating the narrows between macho formalism and the more personalized aesthetic edicts of second-wave feminism. More than thirty works here demonstrate those swings, from the gorgeous "Beanfield with Music" (1984), filled with exuberant strokes of bright-green paint, to "Heart On" (1975), a grid overlaid with painted hearts and sewn-together gashes. Her urgent strokes and range of color—from saturated to pastel—recall Joan Mitchell. Snyder's forays into folk art and attempts at inserting history and biography into the mix are intermittently successful. Epics like "Sweet Cathy's Song (For Cathy Elzea)" (1978) pull it off, but others halt her momentum, slowing down the speedy, lyrical rhythm of the best works. Through Oct. 23. ♦ **"Old Country"** (directed by Allen Kaeja and Mark Adam, 2004) is a twenty-four-minute film that combines dance, theatre, and music to tell the story of a small Polish community on the brink of the Holocaust. Dancers from the Toronto-based Kaeja d'Dance company dressed in period dresses and suits perform with crisp, expressive movements. They break free from the stage, appearing in historic homes, gardens, and rural settings around Ottawa. The lush cinematography is accompanied by a plaintive score by Edgardo Moreno, and there is almost no spoken dialogue or narrative until the very end, when the setting suddenly jumps to present-day Canada and a voice reads a letter by Kaeja's father, written in an internment camp in Germany during the period when nearly his entire family perished. Through Oct. 31. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45, Thursdays, 11 to 9, and Fridays, 11 to 3.)

MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (212-534-1672)—The designers of the historical video exhibition **"Timescapes,"** James Sanders and Jake Barton, drew their formal inspiration for the three-screen installation from Charles and Ray Eames and their spiritual inspiration from New York's patron poet, Walt Whitman. They, too, love the city's bustle and squalor, its "orgies, walks and joys," and the "frequent and swift flash of eyes," which they chronicle with photographs from the museum's vast archives: Percy Byron's images of upper-class families in their drawing rooms, for instance, are contrasted with Jacob Riis's tenement scenes of the same era. Thirty-five digital maps illustrate how bridges, roadways, and trains were engines for urban growth, how the present was raised on the past, and how the varied carols of new immigrants continue to shape our metropolis. Ongoing. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

1 Bowling Green (212-514-3888)—Some of the exquisitely crafted objects in **"First American Art: The Charles and Valerie Diker Collection of American Indian Art"** are easy to identify: beaded clothing, woven baskets, an iron dagger, a baby carrier trimmed with wool and feathers. Others would be mysteries without the wall labels, like an intricately carved ceremonial dance ornament or the ominous-sounding "soul catcher." Standing Bear's watercolor-and-ink-on-cotton depiction of the Battle of Little

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Big Horn, in which he participated, offers a fuller perspective on a historical moment that is sometimes reduced to cowboys and Indians. Through April 9. (Open daily, 10 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

NEW MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART
Temporarily located in the Chelsea Art Museum, 556 W. 22nd St. (212-219-1222)—**"Brian Jungen"** surveys work by the Canadian artist best known for reconfiguring Nike sneakers into tribal masks. Through Dec. 31. ♦ **"The Seventh Annual Altoids Curiously Strong Collection."** Through Oct. 29. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

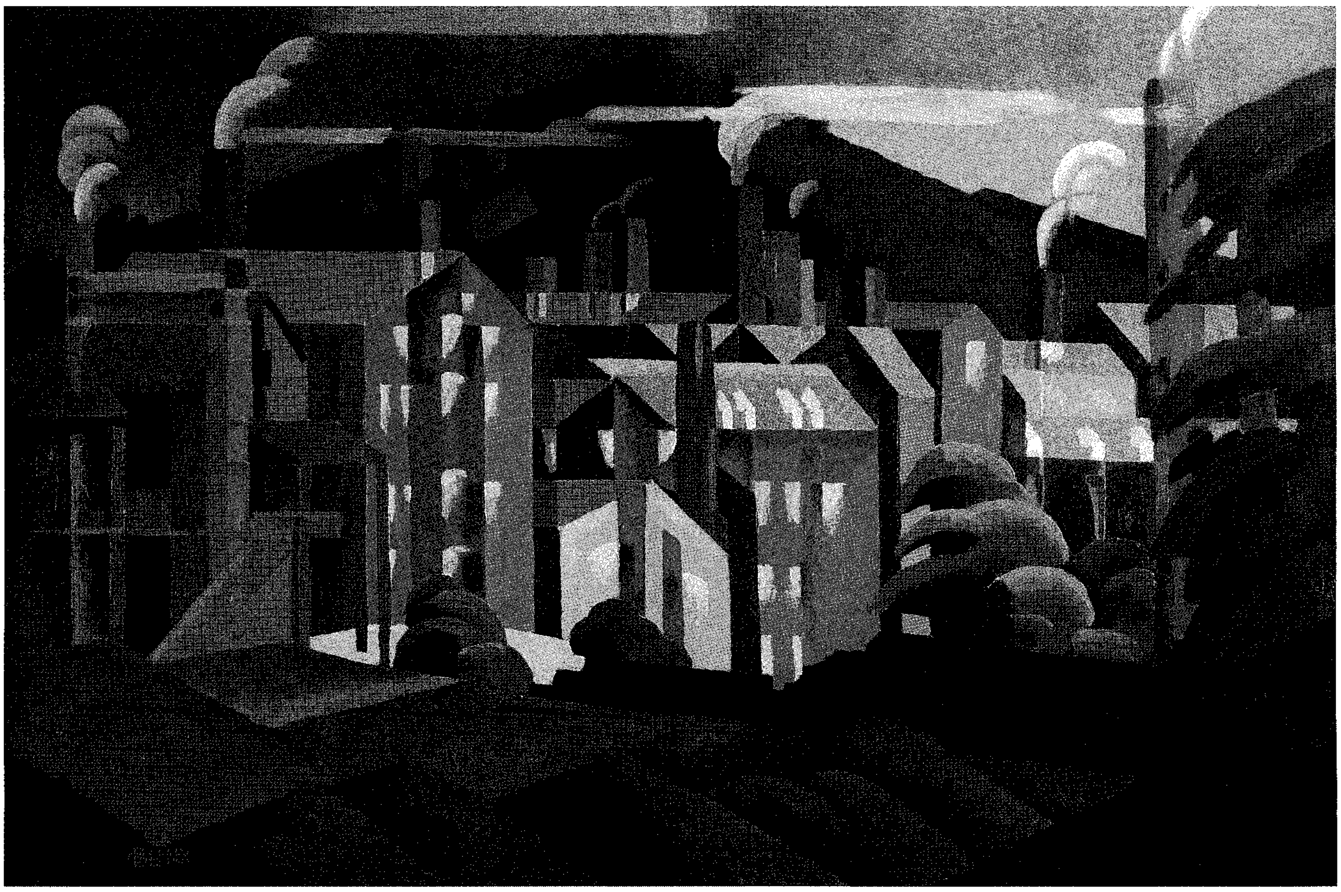
NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
170 Central Park W., at 77th St. (212-873-3400)—**"Slavery in New York,"** a historical and archeological study of the history of slavery in New York City. Through March 5. ♦ The Society's collection of Hudson River School painters serves as the core of **"Nature and the American Vision,"** but other nineteenth-century landscapes displayed here stretch far beyond the tristate area to Yosemite, Europe, South America, and the Arctic. Hudson River School stalwarts like George Innes, Asher Brown Durand, and Thomas Cole paint stops on the American Grand Tour (Lake George, the Catskills, the Adirondacks), as well as bucolic and majestic views of New York's great river. There are also examples of Staffordshire pottery transfer-printed with scenes of mountains and waterfalls and Wade & Croome's folding twelve-foot "Panorama of the Hudson River" (1847), a wonderfully graphic mapping of the river from the tip of Manhattan to Lansingburgh, just above Troy. Through Feb. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 6.)

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. (212-869-8089)—In honor of the renovation of the library's Map Division (scheduled to reopen with new conservation facilities in December), some wonders from the archives are unfolded in **"Treasured Maps."** Cartographic studies of everything from God's creation of the universe (Eden and the Land of Nod are shown floating in a sea of formless darkness) to the New York subway system in the seventies are on view. Organized into sections, the exhibition examines representations of the New World, Africa, Asia, Europe, and the five boroughs and Long Island. Through April 9. (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 7:30, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

QUEENS MUSEUM OF ART
Flushing Meadows–Corona Park (718-592-9700)—**"Odd Lots: Revisiting Gordon Matta-Clark's Fake Estates."** Back in the bankrupt seventies, the city auctioned off minuscule slivers of land sandwiched between buildings or in other unusable locales. Unusable, that is, except as art. In 1973 and 1974, Gordon Matta-Clark (1943-78) purchased fifteen lots, called them "Fake Estates," and documented them with photographs, maps, and deeds. This two-part exhibition starts in Queens—appropriately, since most of the lots, which reverted back to the city after his death, were located in this borough—with a collection of collages, video, and documents related to Matta-Clark's original project scattered throughout the museum and even across its famous city panorama. Over in Manhattan, at White Columns, younger artists—including Francis Alÿs, Mark Dion, Katrin Sigurdardottir, and Mierle Laderman Ukeles—riff on his ideas. Through Jan. 22. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

SOUTH STREET SEAPORT MUSEUM
12 Fulton St., at Water St. (212-748-8600)—Walt Whitman, as he himself proclaimed, was large; he contained multitudes. **"Walt Whitman and the Promise of America"** accordingly describes a wide slice of life in Brooklyn and Manhattan's Five Points during the later nineteenth century. Treasures include a first edition of "Leaves of Grass," a pair of the poet's large and battered boots, and some eminently touching letters he wrote on behalf of wounded soldiers during his service as a Civil War nurse. There are also ephemera, like a case of movable type such as Walt would have used in his newspapering days; a Civil War-era surgeon's field kit; and a screening of "Manhatta," Charles Sheeler and Paul Strand's 1921 film juxtaposing images of the modern island with passages from "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry." Through Dec. 31. ♦ **"Child's Play at the Seaport: Toys, Dolls, and Games from the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries."** Through Dec. 31. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 6.)

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM
144 W. 125th St. (212-864-4500)—**"Scratch"** presents work by the museum's three artists-in-residence for 2004-05: Michael Queenland, William Cordova, and Marc André Robinson. Through Oct. 23. ♦ **"hrlm: pictures,"** a survey of Harlem photographs by James Van Der Zee, Aaron Siskind, Gordon Parks, and Dawoud Bey, among others. Through Oct. 23. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Saturdays, 10 to 6.)



Oscar Bluemner's "Red Port in Winter" (1922), in the Whitney's retrospective of the German-born artist's work. Through Feb. 12.

GALLERIES–UPTOWN

Galleries are usually open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6; please call the gallery for exact hours.

GIL BLANK
Blank, who made an impression in the latest "Greater New York" roundup at P.S. 1, follows up with a shrewd solo début that balances minimalist restraint with Pop showmanship. All his photographs have been digitally scrubbed so that only a primary subject—a clutch of bright balloons, a burst of fireworks, metal letters spelling out "MADRID"—remains, isolated and italicized. This effect is especially dazzling in the case of an elevated, panoramic view of San Francisco at night, one golden artery running like lava down its center. The portrait of a woman who's been completely erased, leaving only her freckles on a flesh-colored square, shows off, but it's an irresistible exercise. Through Oct. 29. (Roth, 160A E. 70th St. 212-717-9067.)

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ADAM DANT
Dant's meticulous ink-and-wash perspective drawings present monuments like St. Paul's Cathedral and the Pantheon upended and rendered transparent, with stubby-legged people walking on the ceiling or scurrying across incongruous catwalks hanging in midair. A see-through beach scene spins the same idea another way, with the sand rendered as a kind of glass-bottomed boat through which we look up at umbrellas, towels, and the wooden pilings of boardwalks. Through Oct. 22. (Baumgold, 74 E. 79th St. 212-861-7338.)

CARRIE MAE WEEMS / CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN / JENNY PERLIN
A strange juxtaposition of three artists working in photo and video. Schneemann's pathbreaking "Eye Body" series, from 1963, is represented in a series of black-and-white photographs documenting the still wild-looking performances. These look odd beside Weems's studiously quiet and distantly narrative stills of a woman with her back to the camera posed in various locales around a run-down-looking Beacon, New York. Perlin's three-screen study of pianists sight-reading continues the theme of disconnection: each time a musician makes an error, she is penalized with a five-second break in the recording, pushing the trio further and further out of synch. Through Oct. 29. (Jack Tilton, 8 E. 76th St. 212-737-2221.)

Short List

DISFARMER: Houk, 745 Fifth Ave. 212-750-7070. Through Oct. 15. **NEIL WELLIVER:** Alexandre, 41 E. 57th St. 212-755-2828. Through Oct. 22. **HENRY WOLF:** Greenberg, 41 E. 57th St. 212-334-0010. Through Oct. 22.

GALLERIES-CHELSEA

DIANE ARBUS
If you thought the Met's "Revelations" retrospective had exhausted the supply of unfamiliar Arbus material, think again. Not all of the forty-nine photos here will be new to Arbus aficionados, but they all offer fresh evidence that her appetite for oddity was matched by her fascination with the ordinary. For every image of a transvestite, a stripper, or a woman with what looks like a small bath mat crumpled on her head, there's one of an elderly couple strolling in the park or a vet holding a little American flag. The show's most startling picture—of a woman masturbating a man on an unmade bed—is hung pointedly next to a shot that noses right into a gaggle of Catholic schoolgirls. Through Oct. 15. (Robert Miller, 524 W. 26th St. 212-366-4774.)

BRIAN BELOTT / ORLAN
Appropriation has entered a new phase, the sneering irony of Richard Prince replaced with wide-eyed reverence for the wonders of the mundane world. A slide show of snapshots rescued from thrift-shop oblivion, accompanied by Dionne Warwick's "Déjà Vu," functions like Edward Steichen's classic "Family of Man" photo exhibit—only Belott's celebration of humanity showcases the births, amateur erotica, and dorky office antics of anonymous strangers. A shelf of zanily reconfigured children's books offer low-tech interactivity, while Belott's faux-naïf collages advance the case for cuteness in serious art. Orlan, best known for bizarre elective cosmetic surgeries, furthers her body-image exploration with a frighteningly stilted group of digitized photos depicting herself as African and pre-Columbian sculpture. Through Oct. 15. (Stux, 530 W. 25th St. 212-352-1600.)

ROBERT BORDO
Bordo's breakout works from the nineteen-eighties resembled painted versions of Minor White photographs, full of light and shadow and complex texture. His recent canvases are more low key, with a palette of soothing pastels and anemic grays. Hazy landscapes, seascapes, and skyscapes carry understated titles like "Lazy Game," "Daybreak," or the shruggingly simple "Another Day" (which doubles as the show's title). Bordo veers from abstraction in "[Wipeout]," a scraped-down canvas with a few residual splotches at the bottom, to representation in the lovely "Open Studio," a light-blue field broken by barely sketched-in squares that suggest paintings hung salon style on a studio wall. Quiet and droll, these paintings are an antidote to a fall art world filled with flashier gestures. Through Oct. 22. (Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave. 212-367-7474.)

ADAM CVIJANOVIC
A pair of murals imagine that gravity has failed, not only in greater Los Angeles but inside the artist's own apartment. Stucco bungalows rip free of their foundations, palm trees and surfboards float upward, and S.U.V.s become spaceships, while the contents of a modest room stick onto the ceiling like a trompe-l'oeil fresco. It's meant as amusing social satire—the end of proper gravitas, etc. But in one of those darkly serendipitous twists of timing, what the images recall most piercingly is hurricane wreckage. Through Oct. 15. (Bellwether, 134 Tenth Ave., at 18th St. 212-929-5959.)

MITCH EPSTEIN
With these twenty-five photos from his book "Recreation: American Photographs 1973-1988," Epstein trains an amused, affectionate, but hardly uncritical eye on leisure pursuits from Topanga Canyon to Central Park. With the exception of a reveller's-eye view of a Mardi Gras float, he sticks to the uneventful: a motorboat ride, a yard sale, an exotic dancer's photo op, two boys sneaking a smoke on a riverbank. The Technicolor crispness of his modestly scaled dye-transfer prints allows Epstein to short-circuit nostalgia and illuminate timeless moments of self-indulgence, camaraderie, obliviousness, and unself-conscious humanity. Through Oct. 22. (Sikkema Jenkins, 530 W. 22nd St. 212-929-2262.)

SOL LEWITT
Seductive textures, visual richness, and an invitation to dream—such sensual pleasures might not be the first thing one thinks of in regard to Sol LeWitt, master of a decades-long experiment in sharp geometries and strictly set variations upon a theme. But since 2000, when his huge wall drawings stole the show in an enormous, travelling retrospective, this face of LeWitt's practice has loomed large. Here, a suite of gouache-and-watercolor drawings, each made of wavy black bars against backgrounds of bright yellow, midnight blue, or brick pink, turn the room into a meditation chamber. Through Oct. 15. (Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. 212-255-1105.)

LAURENT MILLET
Millet photographs his own ephemeral, improvisational sculptures and then dismantles them. For this appealing new group of images, he uses a series of white rooms to stage spontaneous installations—each lasting no more than ten minutes—that suggest drawing in space. Calligraphic loops of wire connect apples, carrots, glass globes, handwritten notes, or scraps of bright paper in compositions that recall Calder and Miró at their most carefree. Another series, of what appear to be monolithic slabs set up at the shoreline, can't compete with all the sprightly insouciance in the room. Through Oct. 29. (Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave. 212-989-7600.)

ED RUSCHA
These photographs are so artless that the title for this show, "Pools, Parking Lots, Gas Stations, and Sunset Strip," pretty much sums it up. If nothing else, these pictures from Ruscha's famous books demonstrate the staying power of early Pop art's uninflected descriptiveness. Ruscha wanted his photographs—many of which were shot from a passing car—to look like real-estate ads, but because there are few signs of human presence here and all the parking lots are empty, they also recall movies of postapocalyptic ghost towns. The pools, the only series in color, have a seedy glamour, but the romance of the West comes to a dead end here. Through Nov. 5. (Richardson, 535 W. 22nd St. 646-230-9610.)

YUKEN TERUYA
Arguably the most charming objects in P.S. 1's "Greater New York" were Teruya's delicate trees

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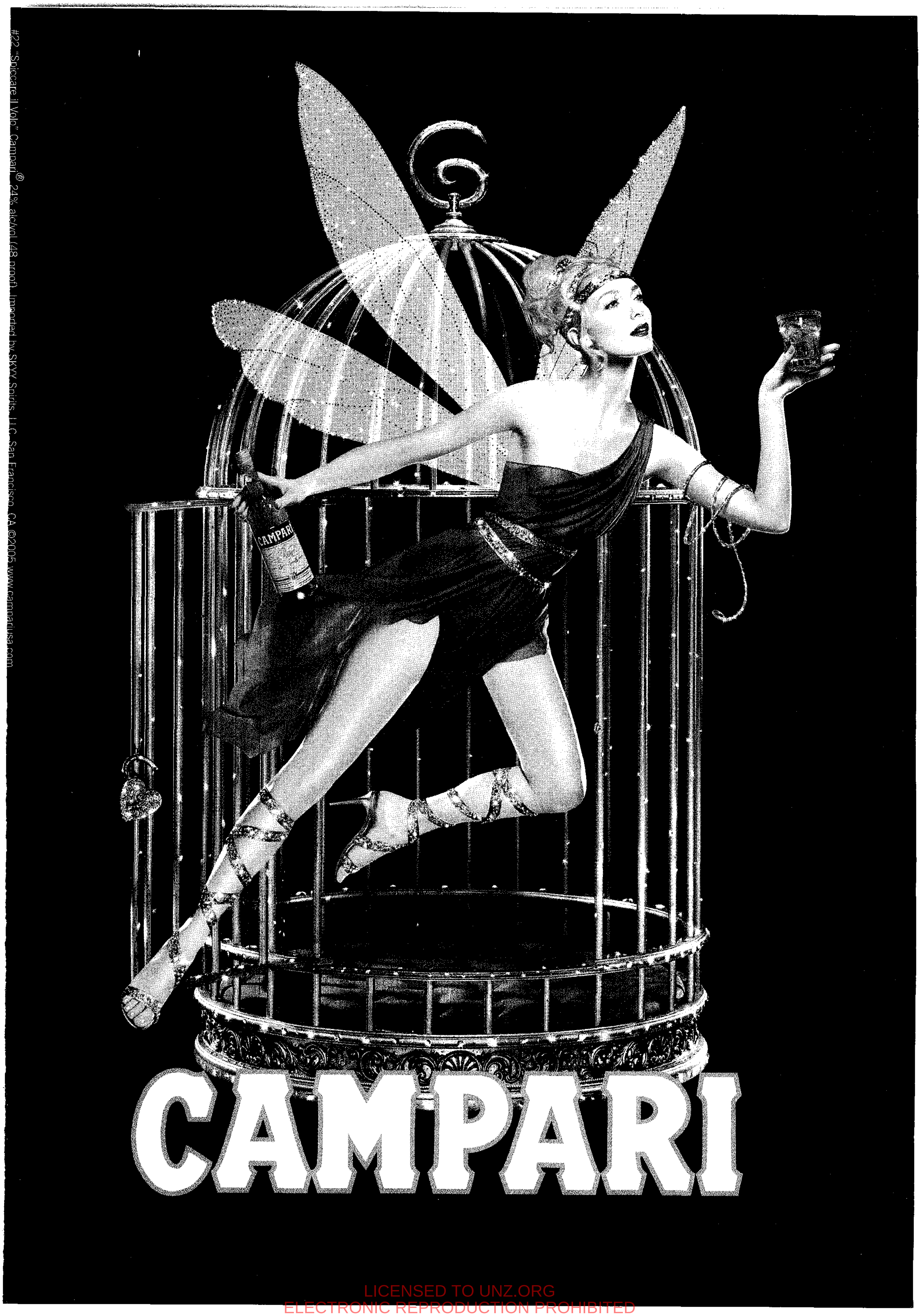
POP NOTES
THE WONDER STUFF

Stevie Wonder will probably never again have the definitive cultural authority he had in 1976, when he released "Songs in the Key of Life." Granted, little of the music he has made since then has matched that album for its beauty, intelligence, and ambition. But not living up to "Knocks Me Off My Feet" (or "Joy Inside My Tears" or "All Day Sucker") is hardly a source of shame. The music Wonder has made since then has been strong, often excellent. He suffers mostly by comparison with himself: it's not possible to be as prolific and protean as he was during the seventies.

"A Time to Love" (Motown), his first collection of new material in a decade, starts off with the darkly powerful "If Your Love Cannot Be Moved," a duet with Kim Burrell that also includes human beat-boxing and ominous strings. From there, the album rarely slows down—or rather, it slows down plenty, but in the best way possible. There are lovely if saccharine ballads destined to be played at weddings in the year 2020 ("True Love," "Can't Imagine Love Without You") and sophisticated rhythmic workouts like "My Love Is on Fire," which features the great flutist Hubert Laws, part of a long, ecumenical guest list that includes Wonder's daughter Aisha, who supplies two delicate duet vocals.

Wonder has always insisted, with the bravery and naïveté of a great artist, on engaging every aspect of the world around him, both politically and emotionally. This can expose his flaws, which range from minor sententiousness to major sentimentality, but his gaudiest excesses are kept in check this time out. "Please Don't Hurt My Baby" wraps a snaky, viciously funky synth line around a sharply sung tale of infidelity and tattling; it's like "O.P.P." with consequences. "Positivity," goofy, upbeat, and highly prolix, takes its song title from Prince, just minutes after Prince donates a guitar part on "So What the Fuss." Elsewhere, on melancholy ballads like "Passionate Raindrops" and "Shelter in the Rain," the forecast is less optimistic. The talk of weather isn't so precipitate: Wonder, who moves freely between rock, pop, soul, funk, jazz, and Tin Pan Alley, has always been a man for all seasons, more so than any other act except maybe the Beatles. But while the Beatles could appear to divide up their assets among four distinct personalities—cynical John, romantic Paul, spiritual George, clownish Ringo—Wonder has to do it himself: all the parts, all the moods.

—Ben Greenman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CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
BACK AT THE RANCH

Anyone who wants to get a sense of ballet's situation in the United States in the *nineteen-forties* should go see Agnes de Mille's "Rodeo," from 1942, during American Ballet Theatre's fall season. In mid-century America, classical dance was considered a Slavic mystery. Non-Russians, it was said, couldn't make ballet, couldn't dance ballet. American choreographers fought back, and "Rodeo"—which shows Southwestern ranch folk combining ballet steps with barn-dance numbers, to a rousing score by Aaron Copland—was one of the most defiant ripostes. Ironically, the piece was made for a Russian, or quasi-Russian, company, the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. In her memoir, de Mille describes the Russians haughtily walking out of rehearsals. Others stayed, and created an American classic. According to de Mille's sister, the cowboys were so sexy that you could smell them in the tenth row. The première got twenty-two curtain calls, and one strain of American ballet, realism, was on its way. The most promising cast at A.B.T. is the one led by Erica Cornejo.

—Joan Acocella

SEYMOUR CHWAST

hovering inside the paper shopping bags from which they were cut. The Japanese-born artist continues that project with "Forest Inc.," a collection of trees carved out of mundane paper products such as McDonald's bags and toilet-tissue rolls. The sly "Three Seasons (Phillips, Sotheby's, Christie's)" goes upmarket, using stiff sacks from the auction-house triumvirate, while "Gap Inc." and "LVMH" explore a sliding scale of luxury, from Old Navy to Le Bon Marché (its orange and purple hues are perfect for rendering fall foliage) to Christian Dior. The idea of fashioning precious objects from detritus is an old one, but Teruya's consumerist take is as clever as his nimble paper-slicing skills. Through Oct. 15. (Bienvenu, 529 W. 20th St. 212-206-7990.)

SUE WILLIAMS
Every time Williams appears to be settling into a comfortable groove, she abruptly snaps back out of it. Half a decade ago she abandoned her squiggly, comic-book-influenced style, somewhere between abstraction and representation, to focus on a more diffuse brand of abstraction, reminiscent of de Kooning's Alzheimer's-era canvases. Now she's returned, partially, to earlier form. The new canvases are blanketed with hybrid bodily shapes resembling intestines, bladders, brains, and orifices. These are densely packed into fields of bright color, creating an abstract, Looney Tunes wallpaper that seems cheerful and benignly floral from a distance. Up close, however, they're disconcertingly manic and scatological. Through Oct. 29. (303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-255-1121.)

KRZYSZTOF WODICZKO
Wodiczko is known for his politically charged projections onto the exteriors of public buildings in the Reagan/Thatcher era. Here he focusses instead on interiors, befitting an era in which history seems to take shape behind closed doors. Projections in the darkened gallery create the illusion of doorways and rooms seen through frosted glass. Figures huddle on the other side, discussing important business or recounting horror stories of the human-rights-abuse variety. The dialogues in languages other than English create a further sense of distance, intensifying the paranoid sense that people right now are holding discussions that have a critical impact on our lives—and we're excluded because we can't understand a word. Through Oct. 22. (Lelong, 528 W. 26th St. 212-315-0470.)

KATHERINE WOLKOFF
Despite the pumped-up scale of her color photographs, there's something appealingly modest about Wolkoff's solo début. The show is divided between big, dark heads seen in profile against dead white space and leafy landscapes that stop just short of being romantic clichés. The silhouette of a moss-covered branch, spooky and baroque, bridges the two groups. Wolkoff may not be wildly original, but she knows just when to pull back and let us look through her eyes. Whether the subject is a delicately detailed child's head limned by light and shadow or sunlight filtered through branches, the experience is memorable. Through Oct. 15. (Danziger, 521 W. 26th St. 212-629-6778.)

"ODD LOTS: REVISITING GORDON MATTA-CLARK'S 'FAKE ESTATES'"
Contemporary artists respond to Matta-Clark's 1973-74 "Fake Estates" project. Among the works here are Francis Alÿs's version set in Mexico and Mark Dion's intricate cutaway model and schematics for "The Gordon Matta-Clark Subterranean Museum." This is half of a two-part exhibit; see also the Queens Museum of Art, which is showing Matta-Clark's own collages. Through Oct. 15. (White Columns, 320 W. 13th St. 212-924-4212.)

Short List

TOM BURCKHARDT: Golden, 539 W. 23rd St. 212-727-8304. Through Oct. 15. **DISFARMER:** Kasher, 521 W. 23rd St. 212-966-3978. Through Oct. 29. **CHRIS JORDAN:** Milo, 525 W. 25th St. 212-414-0370. Through Oct. 15. **ROY LICHTENSTEIN:** Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St. 212-741-1111. Through Oct. 22. **MARTIN MULL:** Spike, 547 W. 20th St. 212-627-4100. Through Nov. 12. **PHILIP PEARLSTEIN:** Cuningham, 541 W. 25th St. 212-242-2772. Through Oct. 22.

GALLERIES-DOWNTOWN

KATHERINE BERNHARDT
A gutsy batch of neo-primitivist paintings inspired by Afro-Caribbean, African-American, and African culture. Slashing brushstrokes and dripping, vivid color are used to depict images of women that are described as self-portraits—tropical doppelgängers, perhaps—set against dark, murky backgrounds. A few males, like the "Old Style Dude with Top Hat" intercede. Mostly, though, Bernhardt explores the new byways of feminism (or post-feminism), taking into account race, class, and fashion. Her sloppy, aggressive aesthetic can be hit or miss, but her m.o. is consistent, following in the footsteps of Kathe Burkhardt and Marlene Dumas and, to a lesser degree, paralleling the wunderkind Dana Schutz. Through Oct. 16. (Canada, 55 Chrystie St. 212-925-4631.)

IAN BURNS
The field is overrun at the moment with artists striving to show how aesthetic naïveté and sophistication can co-exist. Burns stands out a little because his Rube Goldberg contraptions come with a kick: acerbic references to terrorism or Abu Ghraib that cut through the wide-eyed wonder of his doll-house constructions. Raw plywood is the favored material, as in "Another Day at the Office," an interactive sculpture that makes you feel like you're sitting in the middle of a giant, shoddy cuckoo clock. Bells ring, dioramic images appear, the floor moves underneath you: all the jury-rigged wires and rough edges are reminders of how life itself is an ad-hoc assembly, capable of malfunctioning at any moment. Through Oct. 22. (Spencer Brownstone, 39 Wooster St. 212-334-3455.)

RICHARD DUPONT
Accurate down to the shape of his fingernails, Dupont's tabletop cast-resin figures are created through laser scanning, with which he has assembled some two million data units into a 3-D model of his body. The mini-he's are cast in fleshy pinkish material, torqued and stretched so that limbs and torso appear squashed or elongated. Through Oct. 29. (Williams, 313 bis W. 4th St. 212-229-2757.)

JIM HODGES
We're familiar with camouflage for bodies, vehicles, or buildings—but for open space? Hodges's "Look and See" is a fifty-foot-long, nine-ton stainless-steel sculpture that reflects, refracts, and frames the space around it with big camo-patterned cutouts in black, white, and mirror-bright silver. Like most good public art, it intrigues without overwhelming or imposing. Rather than blocking off space or hampering visibility—as Richard Serra's infamous "Tilted Arc" did at Federal Plaza—this curvy barrier is perforated and engaging; fun-house reflections of visitors mix with reconfigured views of the landscape. Through Oct. 30. (Creative Time's Art on the Plaza at the Ritz-Carlton, Battery Park City. 212-206-6674.)

JAMES HOPKINS
Sculptures constructed from household items take on laugh-inducing, surreal charm. A row of liquor bottles stand perpendicular to the floor, though the shelf they rest on has tilted a drunken thirty degrees; a splayed umbrella is cut into a spiderweb; a stepladder balances breathlessly on two legs. The pièce de résistance is a wall-mounted bookcase stacked with LPs, appliances, boxes, and books; a few minutes' contemplation reveals the contours of a skull carved into the humdrum collection. Further contemplation also suggests that the show's humor belies an intense aware-

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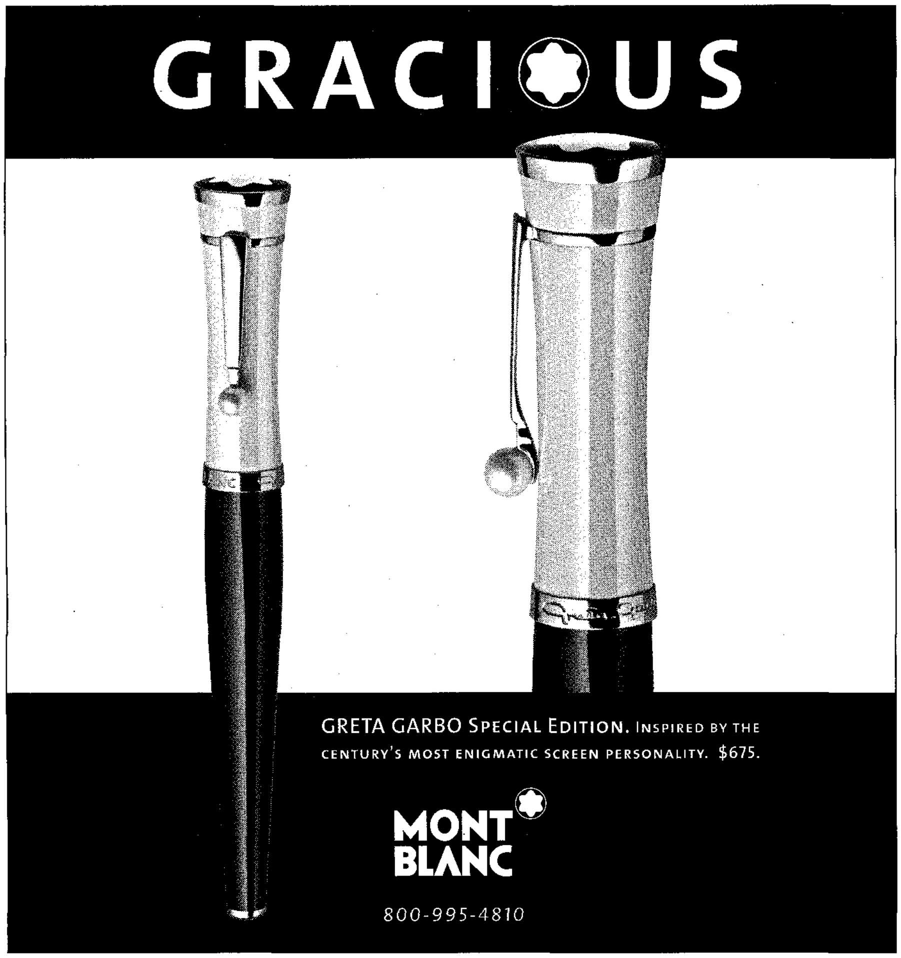

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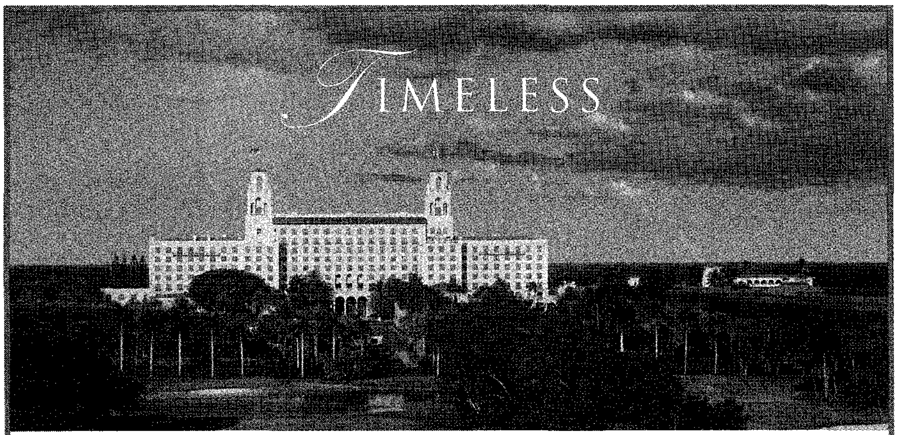

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ness of the existential terror in daily life. Through Oct. 22. (Rivington Arms, 102 Rivington St. 646-654-3213.)

ALEX KATZ
Last spring's unveiling of a suite of Edward Hopper drawings is echoed by this cache of never-before-seen Katz drawings from 1965 to 2002. Like Hopper's, these sketches are quietly precise studies of everyday life. Lined up like storyboards or comic-book panels, they chart the paces of mundane obsession: exploring the structure of a picnic table or a pair of ice skates or toying with the composition of figures at a dinner party. Other drawings cycle through the seasons, depicting swimmers at the beach in summer and city scenes in the fall, with a turn of interest to blossoms in spring. The show is densely packed—it contains nearly a hundred and forty drawings—but given Katz's spare, clean style it doesn't feel overloaded. Through Nov. 12. (Peter Blum, 99 Wooster St. 212-343-0441.)

THURSTON MOORE / JOCKO WEYLAND
In the vinyl era of recorded music, album art had a greater presence than it does in the digital age. Weyland pays homage to some of the indie greats with an installation of framed photographed album-cover fragments hung salon style, including a Raymond Pettibon Black Flag cover and scraps from Wire, Dead Kennedys, and Minor Threat covers. Moore's "Street Mouth" collages nod to appropriation-era Richard Prince, only they're cribbed from music memorabilia, with photos and text references to Blondie, Talking Heads, the Ramones, Wayne County, Lou Reed, et al. Together, the collages function like a discursive musicology lecture on seventies and eighties New York rock. Through Oct. 29. (KS Art, 73 Leonard St. 212-219-9918.)

"THE ART OF 9/11"
The critic, philosopher, and curator Arthur C. Danto muses in his statement that "even the most ordinary people respond to tragedy with art." The sentiment is reflected in Leslie King-Hammond's "Prayer for the New Ancestors: Altar for the Warrior Spirits of 9/11," which mimics, with statuettes and full-page newspaper-ad memorials, Afro-Caribbean altars and the impromptu street shrines that have become our modern, public mourning sites. Jeffrey Lohn's photos of the ubiquitous post-9/11 missing-person flyers echo this, as do Mary Miss, Victoria Marshall, and Elliott Maltby's proposal for a temporary flower wreath around Ground Zero. The levelling nature of tragedy is expressed in artists' descriptions of where they were that fateful day and how they responded creatively—sometimes as unexpectedly as Cindy Sherman's "cheery on the surface, but horrific underneath" clown photographs. Through Oct. 15. (Apex Art, 291 Church St. 212-431-5270.)

DANCE

NATIONAL BALLET OF CHINA
For decades, China's foremost ballet company had two modes, the Russian classics and Maoist pageants. "Raise the Red Lantern," a story ballet about the wives of a feudal lord, is a conscious attempt to add another: East-West. The choreography, by Wang Xinpeng and Wang Yuanyuan, and the melodramatic score, by Chen Qigang, blend Peking Opera with Western forms. The results aren't overpowering, but the theatrics are. Zhang Yimou, who directed the 1991 film of the same name, directs this ballet adaptation as high-saturation cinema. (BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Oct. 11-15 at 7:30.)

ODC/SAN FRANCISCO
The veteran modern-dance company returns to New York after a hiatus of four years, to present three New York premières. "On a Train Heading South," choreographed by ODC's founder, Brenda Way, is a comment on global warming in which a Cassandra figure, performed by the electric Anne Zivolich, frantically leaps, fights, kicks, and pursues the other dancers, who gracefully ignore her

while twelve blocks of ice suspended above the stage melt on top of them. Another Way work, "24 Exposures," performed to a countrified, percussive score for strings by Edgar Meyer, displays the ensemble's great athleticism and strength. "RingRoundRozi" is a dark take on child's play, by the resident choreographer KT Nelson. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. Oct. 11-15 at 8 and Oct. 16 at 2 and 7:30.)

BEBE MILLER COMPANY
The funky, inventive choreographer marks her twentieth-anniversary season with "Landing/Place," inspired by the cultural dislocation she felt on a 1999 trip through Eritrea. Giant onstage screens are flooded with motion-capture images, whose not-quite-right proportions set the tone for the evening. Everything is slightly off-kilter: costumes, unison, facial expressions. Miller raises the intensity by choreographing vigorous flailing arms, fast full-body undulations, and odd repetitive motions that look like tics. With text by Miller and an electronic score composed and played live by Albert Mathias. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. Oct. 12-13 and Oct. 15 at 7:30 and Oct. 14 at 7:30 and 10.)

HENNING RÜBSAM: SENSEDANCE
The irrepressibly cheery Henning Rübsam appreciates technique, but he also likes to tap into a ballet dancer's inner grooviness. In an evening of both bare feet and toe shoes, six of Rübsam's works are shown to particular advantage with a cast that includes dancers from the still-on-hiatus Dance Theatre of Harlem. The lineup includes last season's intricate duet "Chorale," the male pas de deux from the Brahms "Double Concerto," and the première of the ensemble piece "Dinner Is West," set to original music by Beata Moon. (Baruch College Performing Arts Center, 55 Lexington Ave., at 25th St. 646-312-4085. Oct. 12-14 at 8, Oct. 15 at 2 and 8, and Oct. 16 at 3.)

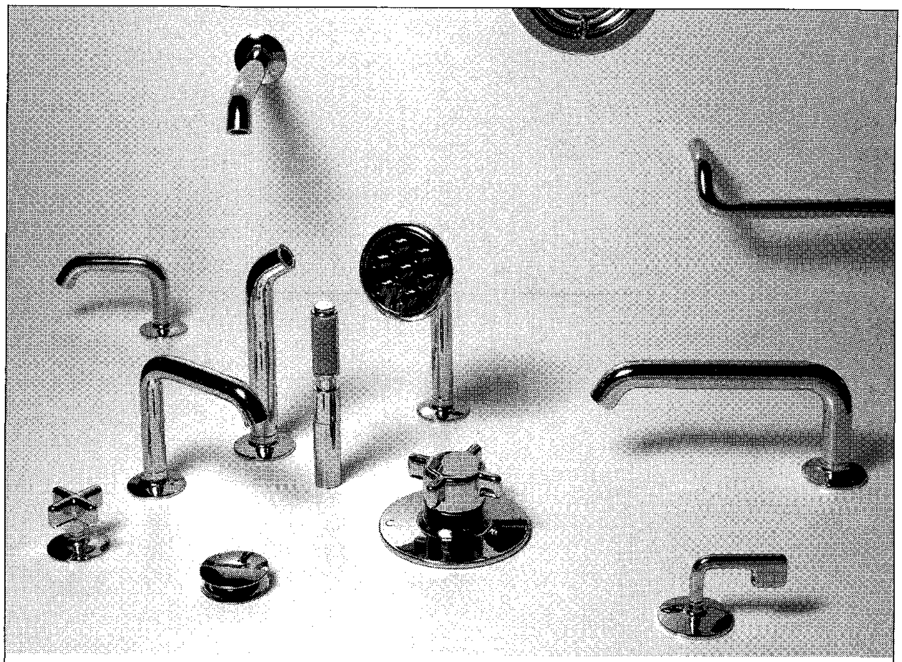
"CARACOLAS DE UN MAR DE FUEGO"
Maestra Maria Elena Anaya leads her Mexico-based, all-female troupe in an evening of modern dance, flamenco, and song. During long unpercussive interludes, the women unfurl their willowy arms and stroll regally across the stage. Then a woman drops a heel to the floor, the live flamenco band kicks in, and the feet start flying. (La Mama E.T.C., 74A E. 4th St. 212-475-7710. Oct. 13-15 at 7:30 and Oct. 16 at 2:30 and 7:30. Through Oct. 23.)

2005 D.U.M.B.O. DANCE FESTIVAL
The fifth annual go-round for the festival features more than ninety choreographers. Headliners include Yoshiko Chuma and the School of Hard Knocks, Amos Pinhasi, the Tiffany Mills Company, and Nina Winthrop and Dancers. (White Wave, 25 Jay St., and Empire-Fulton Ferry State Park. For more information, visit www.whitewavedance.com or call 718-855-8822. Oct. 13-16.)

"YUNNAN REVEALED"
The World Music Institute presents an evening of dance and music from the Yunnan province of southwestern China, touring the U.S. for the first time. Fifteen artists will perform a varied program, including a haunting Naxi war lament, a Wa rooster dance in which a Papageno-like birdman struts, waddles, and shakes his long tail provocatively, and playful dances by a troupe of ten Yi performers, who interlock limbs to emulate the movement of snails, ants, and a dragonfly to the accompaniment of bamboo tobacco boxes played like castanets. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. Oct. 14 at 8.)

"THE STORY OF TAP"
The amiable Hank Smith brings back his popular tapping talk show, interviewing some of New York's better tap dancers over a three-week series. This week his guests are the feisty old-timers Harold (Stumpy) Cromer and Mable Lee. (Dixon Place, 258 Bowery St., second floor. 212-219-0736. For a full schedule, see www.dixonplace.org. Oct. 14-15 at 8.)

SAVION GLOVER
In January, the master hoofer Savion Glover joined a chamber orchestra and applied his improvisational brilliance to a program of Vivaldi,



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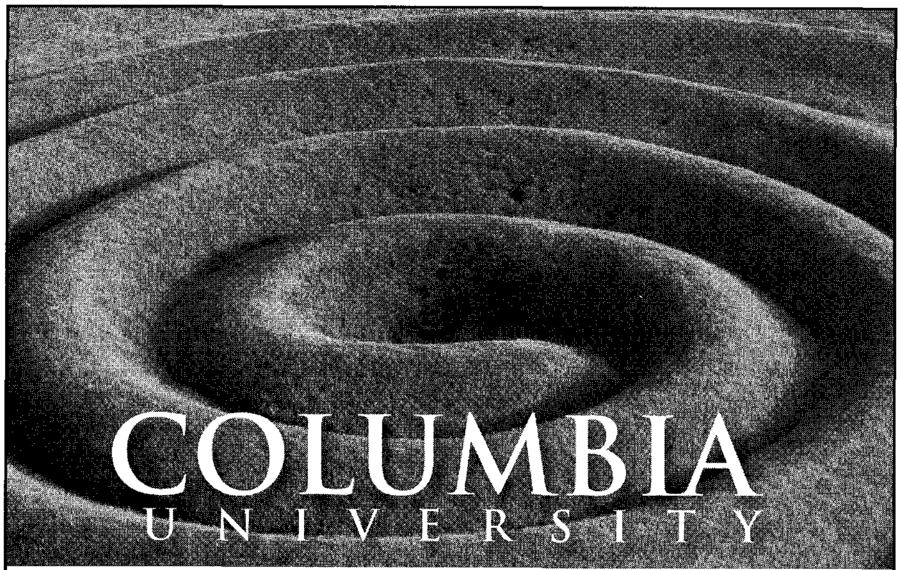

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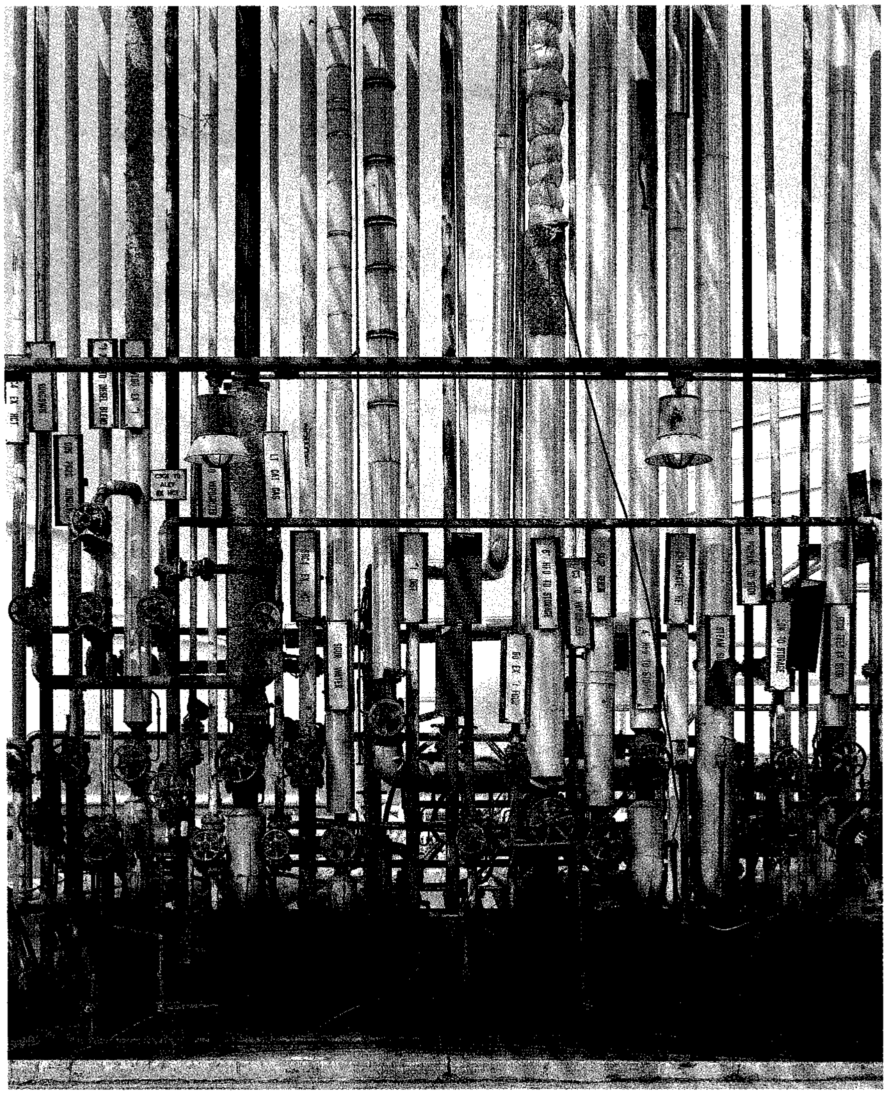

"Oil Refineries #3, Oakville, Ontario," by Edward Burtynsky, at the Brooklyn Museum.

Bach, Bartok, and Piazzolla. Over the course of the run, he found a way to make overly familiar music sound fresh and a place for himself in a repertoire not usually associated with tap dancing. It was a successful experiment, and he repeats it this week in Brooklyn. (Whitman Theatre, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 212-352-3101. Oct. 15 at 8.)

"TANGO FLAMENCO"
Not for purists: this show, the creation of two classically trained dancers (one Spanish and one French), emerges out of the nuevo-flamenco trend, smoothing the form's sharp edges and fusing it with other dance styles, like ballet, modern dance, and, in this case, tango. Add the Ensamble Nuevo Tango, a nontraditional, Piazzolla-inspired group—the bandoneon traded in for an oboe, plus a cello and a violin—and, instead of the loucheness of tango and the abandon of flamenco, you get a sleek, calculated, and artful spectacle. (Whitman Theatre, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 212-352-3101. Oct. 16 at 3.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
Oct. 12 at 7:30 and Oct. 15 at 8: Bryn Terfel commands the stage in the title role of **"Falstaff,"** joined by a cast that includes such singers as Heidi Grant Murphy, Patricia Racette, Stephanie Blythe, Maria Zifchak, and Roberto Frontali; James Levine conducts. ♦ Oct. 13 and Oct. 17 at 8: Cesare Lievi's bouncy production of Rossini's **"La Cenerentola"** has the innocent charm of vintage Saturday-morning cartoons; it returns with Olga Borodina, a commanding mezzo-soprano and a surprisingly gifted comedienne, in the title role and Barry Banks as Don Ramiro; Antonello Allemandi conducts. ♦ Oct. 14 and Oct. 18 at 8: Sonja Frisell's staging of **"Aida,"** the crown jewel among the Met's more conservative productions, uses breathtaking sets and resplendent costumes to create a world that matches the mystery and grandeur of Verdi's imaginary Egypt—and that transcends the strengths and weaknesses of any particular cast. This one, hardly without merit, features Michèle Crider in the title role, along with Dolora Zajick, Salvatore Licitra, Lado Antaneli, and Paata Burchuladze; James Conlon. ♦ Oct. 15 at 1:30: Philippe Jordan, who made a stunning début last season conducting the Met's best "Don Giovanni" in years, is back to lead a revival of **"Carmen,"** in Franco Zeffirelli's clichéd but sustainable production. Milena Kitic, making her Met début, takes the title role, joined by Marco Berti (a powerful young tenor who stood out in the Met's opening-night gala) as Don José, Ruth Ann Swenson, and Jean-Luc Chaignaud. (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA
Oct. 13 at 7:30 and Oct. 15 at 1:30: **"Tosca,"** with Carla Thelen Hanson, Jorge Antonio Pita, and Todd Thomas in the leading roles; John DeMain conducts. ♦ Oct. 14 at 8 and Oct. 16 at 1:30: Leon Botstein, a conductor whose penchant for underserved repertory has taken him far, is making his City Opera début by leading the first New York performances in nine decades of **"Ariane et Barbe-Bleue,"** an opera by Paul Dukas, a contemporary of Debussy, that some regard as highly as "Pelléas." Renate Behle and Ethan Herschenfeld take the title roles. ♦ Oct. 15 at 8: **"Il Barbiere di Siviglia,"** with Jennifer Rivera, Hugh Russell (in his début, as Figaro), John Tessier, and Nikolay Didenko; Joseph Rescigno, an expert conductor of Italian repertory, is in the pit. (New York State Theatre. 212-721-6500.)

STRAUSS'S "DAPHNE"
It was inevitable that Renée Fleming, our reigning Strauss soprano, would eventually bring her shining voice to the title role of this one-act "bucolic tragedy," a rarity that had its New York première only last year (by City Opera). Most of the cast of the new Decca recording joins her in a concert performance, including Anna Larsson, Johan Botha, and Semyon Bychkov conducting the W.D.R. Symphony Orchestra of Cologne; Roberto Saccà takes on the punishing role of Leukippos, the lead tenor. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Oct. 15 at 8.)

DICAPO OPERA
New York's third professional opera company begins its season with **"La Bohème,"** with Inna Dukach, among others, heading the cast; Francisco Bonnín conducts. (Dicapo Opera Theatre, 184 E. 76th St. 212-288-9438. Oct. 15 at 8 and Oct. 16 at 4.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
Marin Alsop, whose triumphant (but not unchallenged) appointment as the Baltimore Symphony's new music director has been cushioned by the award of a MacArthur Fellowship, leads the Philharmonic in a program that will include not only James MacMillan's "The Confession of Isobel Gowdie"—the kind of colorful new music on which she thrives—but also Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 1 (with the formidable Midori) and Brahms's sober First Symphony. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656. Oct. 14-15 at 8 and Oct. 18 at 7:30.)

CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA
Another controversial conductor, another Brahms First. Franz Welser-Möst leads his magnificent ensemble in only one Carnegie Hall concert this season, a program that features an additional Brahms masterwork (the "Academic Festival Overture") along with a New York première by the very busy Chinese-American composer Chen Yi ("Si Ji," or "Four Seasons"). (212-247-7800. Oct. 17 at 8.)

CHOIR OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY
One of the legendary choral ensembles of Great Britain (chartered by Henry VIII) offers an evening of music by Byrd, Gibbons, Walton, and Bach, among others, at Manhattan's grandest Episcopal church. (St. Thomas Church, Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. 212-664-9360. Oct. 18 at 7:30.)

ORPHEUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
Richard Goode, the New York pianist whose probing and elemental style is a perfect match for this conductorless ensemble, is the featured artist in a concert of works by Cherubini, J. C. Bach, Mozart (the Piano Concerto No. 9, "Jeunehomme"), and Beethoven (the Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor). (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Oct. 18 at 8.)

RECITALS

BARGEMUSIC
Oct. 13 at 7:30: The tenor Sergey Seleznioff, the bass Mikhail Kalinovsky, and the pianist Victoria Spivak offer Rimsky-Korsakov's mini-opera "Mozart and Salieri" (on Pushkin's story, a takeoff on the legend that Mozart was murdered by his jealous rival) along with works by Mozart and Salieri themselves. ♦ Oct. 14 at 7:30: Elizabeth Farnum, a New York soprano who's used to taking chances, performs an evening of unaccompanied works ranging from contemporary music (by Violette, Eckardt, and Maxwell Davies) to chants by Hildegard von Bingen and spirituals. ♦ Oct. 15 at 7:30 and Oct. 16 at 4: Beethoven's Three String Trios, Op. 9, performed by the violin-

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ist Mark Peskanov, the violist Jeanne Mallow, and the cellist Barbara Stein Mallow. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

TAKÁCS QUARTET
On its last New York outing, this superb Anglo-Hungarian ensemble (with a new, American violist) played not only with a relaxed, layered, Old World style but with a level of musical insight that compelled attention. Their Zankel Hall concert features Debussy's String Quartet with music by Mozart—the "Dissonant" Quartet and the String Quintet in G Minor (with the violist James Dunham). (212-247-7800. Oct. 14 at 7:30.)

BEAUX ARTS TRIO
The venerable piano trio is in the second year of a three-year Beethoven project, which will also feature a selection of contemporary works mixed in. Their latest program includes the Cello Sonata in F Major, Op. 17, the Violin Sonata in G Major, Op. 96, and the Trio in E-Flat Major, Op. 70, No. 2, along with the U.S. première of Jan Müller-Wieland's "Schlaflied." (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-570-3949. Oct. 14 at 8.)

AMERICAN MODERN ENSEMBLE: "POWERHOUSE PIANISTS"
Two of Gotham's strongest new-music advocates, Steven Gosling and Blair McMillen, perform recent American works by such composers as Lee Hyla, Annie Gosfield, Joan Tower, and George Tsontakis. (Tenri Cultural Institute, 43A W. 13th St. Oct. 15 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

JUAN MARTÍN
The 92nd Street Y may be struggling to rebrand itself as a vital concert center, but many of its traditions will continue—including the hall's devotion to the art of the guitar recital. Martín, a noted exponent of flamenco style who seldom plays in New York, will offer a selection of works announced from the stage. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Oct. 15 at 8.)

BROOKLYN FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC
Even Bargemusic needs some competition: Brooklyn audiences can also check out this series, which features the Hyperion String Quartet (with the pianist Ron Regev) playing a program of music by Mozart (the "Dissonant" Quartet), Ron Petrides, Paul Moravec, and Brahms (the Piano Quintet). (Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, Lafayette Ave. at S. Oxford St. Oct. 16 at 3. Tickets at the door.)

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC ENSEMBLES
The series, which gives the orchestra's virtuosos space to stretch their limbs in the chamber repertoire, offers its first concert of the season, featuring music by Bach, Rossini, Stravinsky (the rarely heard Septet), and Shostakovich (the Piano Trio No. 2). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. Oct. 16 at 3.)

"MUSIC BEFORE 1800" SERIES: SEQUENTIA
Benjamin Bagby's renowned medieval group of singers and players offers "Lost Songs of a Rhineland Harper," reconstructions of music from the dawn of Christian Europe. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 212-666-9266. Oct. 16 at 4.)

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER
A concert of music by Poulenc, Franck (the cello-and-piano version of the Violin Sonata), and Brahms (the Piano Quartet No. 2 in A Major) performed by the bassoonist Frank Morelli, the cellist Gary Hoffman, and the pianist Gilbert Kalish, among others. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-875-5788. Oct. 16 at 5 and Oct. 18 at 7:30.)

"WEAVING JAPANESE SOUNDS"
The Klavierhaus concert showroom offers a seventy-fifth-year concert (performed by the pianist Sachiko Kato) commemorating the late Toru Takemitsu that includes not only his complete solo-piano music but also works that influenced him (by Webern, Debussy, Messiaen, and Duke Ellington). (211 W. 58th St. 212-245-4535. Oct. 17 at 7.)

PHILIPPE MANOURY: "JUPITER"
The French composer, noted for his work combining complex electronic sounds with the contributions of live performers, oversees a concert (featuring the vocalist Juliana Snapper) that includes not only the title work but "En Echo," a setting of poems inspired by Nabokov's "Lolita." (Frederick Loewe Theatre, New York University, 35 W. 4th St. Oct. 17 at 8. No tickets required.)

WONNY SONG
The Korean-Canadian pianist, the winner of the 2005 Young Concert Artists International Auditions, makes his New York recital début with works by Beethoven, Ravel, Mussorgsky ("Pictures at an Exhibition"), and Paulus. (Zankel Hall. 212-307-6656. Oct. 18 at 7:30.)

MOVIES OPENING

DOMINO
Tony Scott directed this action thriller, about a young woman (Keira Knightley) who shuns her life of privilege in Beverly Hills to become a bounty hunter. Opening Oct. 14. (In wide release.)

ELIZABETHTOWN
Cameron Crowe's latest romantic comedy, in which a shoe designer (Orlando Bloom) en route to his father's funeral in Kentucky falls in love with an optimistic flight attendant (Kirsten Dunst). With Susan Sarandon. Opening Oct. 14. (In wide release.)

THE FOG
A remake of John Carpenter's 1980 horror thriller, about the centennial of a mysterious shipwreck. Directed by Rupert Wainwright. Opening Oct. 14. (In wide release.)

HENRI LANGLOIS: PHANTOM OF THE CINEMATHEQUE
Jacques Richard directed this documentary about Langlois, the so-called "Father of the New Wave," who co-founded the Cinémathèque Française in Paris in 1936 and was a pioneer of film archiving. In French. Opening Oct. 12. (Film Forum.)

INNOCENT VOICES
In El Salvador in the mid-eighties, in the midst of a civil war, a boy must choose between joining the army or the guerrilla fighters. Directed by Luis Mandoki. In Spanish. Opening Oct. 14. (Empire 25 and Sunshine Cinema.)

LAND OF PLENTY
A new drama by Wim Wenders, about a college student (Michelle Williams) who seeks out her uncle (John Diehl), a Vietnam veteran in the U.S., and becomes involved in a terrorist plot. Opening Oct. 12. (IFC Center.)

LOGGERHEADS
Tim Kirkman directed this drama, about a sea-turtle-obsessed drifter, his adoptive parents, and his birth mother. With Tess Harper, Bonnie Hunt, and Kip Pardue. Opening Oct. 14. (Sunshine Cinema.)

NINE LIVES
Rodrigo Garcia's drama interweaves the stories of nine women. The ensemble cast includes Sissy Spacek, Robin Wright Penn, Aidan Quinn, Glenn Close, Joe Mantegna, Holly Hunter, and Dakota Fanning. Opening Oct. 14. (Angelika Film Center and Paris.)

THE PRESIDENT'S LAST BANG
A satire directed by Im Sangsoo, about a failed attempt in 1979 by a South Korean intelligence agency to assassinate the newly elected President. In Korean. Opening Oct. 14. (Cinema Village.)

WHERE THE TRUTH LIES
Atom Egoyan directed this mystery based on the novel by Rupert Holmes, about a celebrity journalist (Alison Lohman) investigating the breakup of a comedy duo (Kevin Bacon and Colin Firth). Opening Oct. 14. (In wide release.)

NOW PLAYING

BED AND BOARD
About the married life of François Truffaut's hero, Antoine Doinel (Jean-Pierre Léaud). Léaud appears to have developed a dogged resistance to acting, but, as Antoine's bride, Claude Jade, who looks like a less ethereal, more practical Catherine Deneuve, is lovely. The movie is cheerful, if conventionally "beguiling." Cinematography by Nestor Almendros. In French. Released in 1970.—*Pauline Kael* (IFC Center; Oct. 14-16.)

CAPOTE
How could Truman Capote, with his high, thin, goose-quill voice and his floating palms, possibly have gained the trust of the straightforward men and women of Holcomb, Kansas, when he went there for this magazine in 1959 to investigate the pointless slaughter of four members of the Clutter family—the murders that became the subject of Capote's masterpiece, "In Cold Blood"? The writer Dan Futterman and the director Bennett Miller tell us how, and the wonderful Philip Seymour Hoffman first captures Capote physically and then works inward to the vulnerable yet rotting soul. This is easily the most intelligent and detailed film ever made about a writer's working method and character. When Capote gets a look at one of the murderers, Perry Smith (Clifton Collins, Jr.), the focus of the movie becomes the intimate, artistically necessary but morally questionable relation between artist and felon. With Catherine Keener as the novelist Harper Lee; Mark Pellegrino as Perry's partner, Dick Hickock; and Bob Balaban as the *New Yorker* editor William Shawn, who is pictured, bizarrely, as hungry for the bloody details of the crime.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 10/10/05.) (In wide release.)

THE CONSTANT GARDENER
In this frenzied adaptation of a John le Carré novel, Ralph Fiennes plays a refined but bumbling British diplomat who arrives in Kenya with his belligerent new wife (Rachel Weisz). Impatient with niceties, she goes after the pharmaceutical giants, who are testing a new drug and covering up the results. When she dies, apparently in an accident, her loving and uncomprehending husband is forced to retrace her steps and rekindle some of her fire. The movie is a curious, roiling mix of genres that stirs marital romance into a heated indictment of a vast, conspiratorial crime. The director is Fernando Meirelles, who has imported the busy style of his last picture, "City of God," and given it an extra jolt; the images of Africa, forever in hot pursuit of one another, leave you not so much exhilarated as exhausted, long before the story is done. With Danny Huston and a mischievous Bill Nighy.—*Anthony Lane* (9/5/05) (In wide release.)

DUMA
The director Carroll Ballard ("The Black Stallion," "Never Cry Wolf") returns with another gorgeously shot nature adventure, the tale of a boy who adopts a baby cheetah and sets out to return it to the wild. The film's early plot conventions are less than engaging, but, once the boy (played amiably by Alexander Michaletos) takes off on his mostly solitary trek across the threatening African terrain, Ballard's film rises with elegant simplicity. Africa's rich landscape and its wildlife are stunningly presented, and lessons of courage and responsibility are explored with an affecting spirit.—*Bruce Diones* (In wide release.)

EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED
As Jonathan Safran Foer, the repressed Jewish novelist in the making who goes in search of his roots in Ukraine, Elijah Wood is inhumanly neat and wears big glasses in front of his extraordinary blue eyes. Many things are off in Liev Schreiber's first directorial effort, an adaptation of the novel by Foer (who named the main character after himself). The movie veers from slapstick to tragedy to shimmering wonder-of-life euphoria, not always successfully, and Schreiber can't bring the material to a satisfying dramatic climax. But there are affecting moments, too, as Jonathan wanders through the countryside with two unreliable guides from Odessa—Alex (Eugene Hutz), an Americanophile lout, and his irascible grandfather (Boris Leskin), who has buried roots of his own. Shot in Prague and its environs, doubling for Ukraine.—*D.D.* (In wide release.)

THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
A priest (Tom Wilkinson) has been charged with criminal negligence for allowing a girl to die while he performed an exorcism on her. The frame of the movie consists of an austerely photographed

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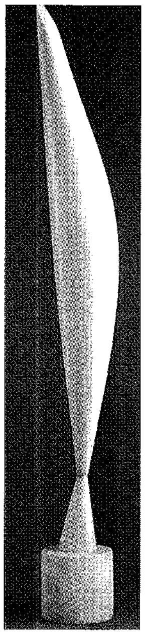

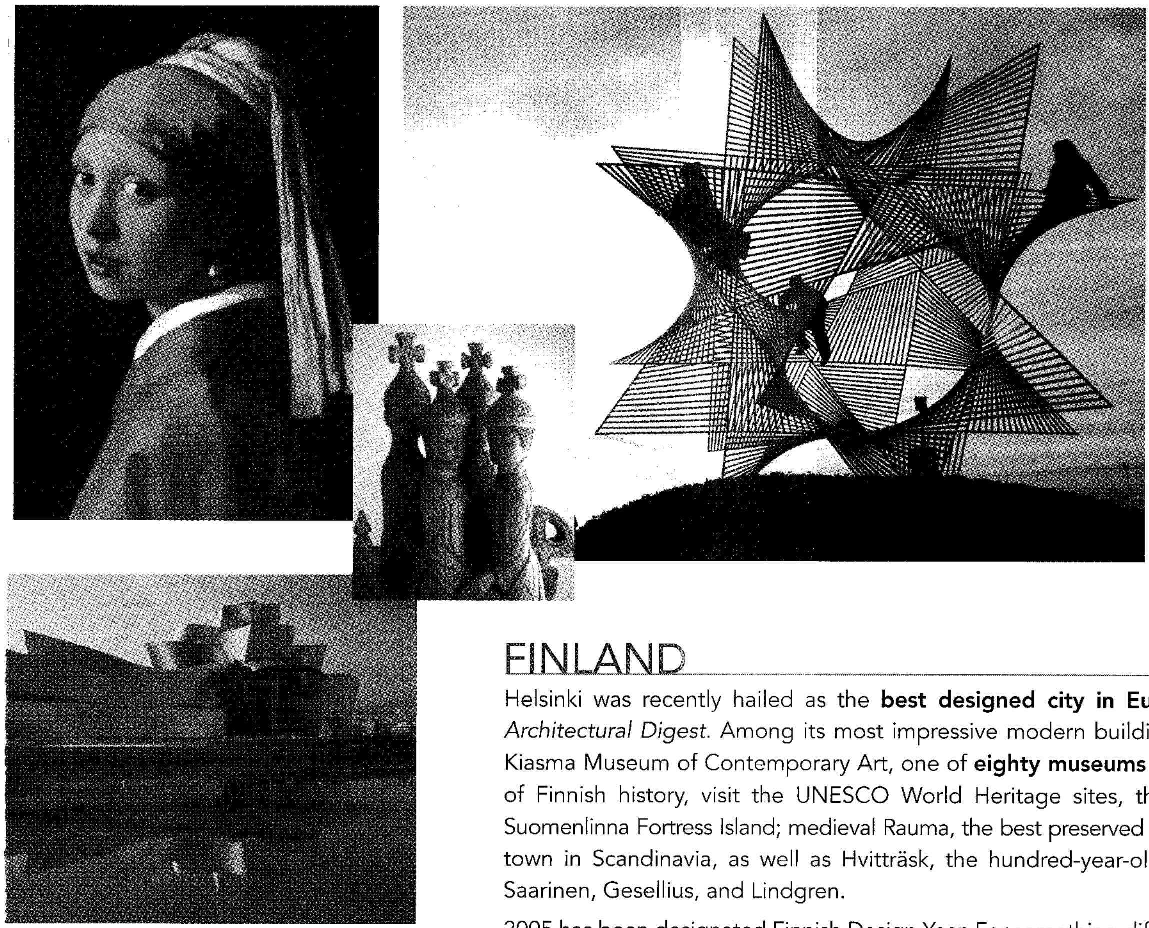

FINLAND

Helsinki was recently hailed as the **best designed city in Europe** by the *Harvard Architectural Digest*. Among its most impressive modern buildings is the remarkable Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, one of **eighty museums** in the city. For a taste of Finnish history, visit the UNESCO World Heritage sites, the eighteenth-century Suomenlinna Fortress Island; medieval Rauma, the best preserved and designed wooden town in Scandinavia, as well as Hvitträsk, the hundred-year-old studio of architects Saarinen, Gesellius, and Lindgren.

2005 has been designated Finnish Design Year. For something different, the Korkeasaari International Ice Sculpture competition "Arts Meet Ice" takes place at the Helsinki Zoo in January.

Helsinki three-night packages including air and hotel accommodation start at $499.

SPAIN

Beyond Madrid's **sumptuous architecture** and its relaxed tapas bars, the Prado houses **masterpieces** including Goya, El Greco, and Velázquez. The Thyssen-Bornemisza spans the thirteenth through the twentieth century, while the Reina Sofía is Madrid's premier modern art museum. The sparkling titanium of Frank Gehry's Guggenheim ▶

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(SPAIN continued)

put major port Bilbao on the cultural map, and now the **Abandoibarra project** is part of a **massive city regeneration**. The glossy riverside attraction now includes the Euskalduna Conference Centre, Concert Hall, and Calatrava's spectacular Zubi Zuri pedestrian bridge.

A more than two-thousand-year retrospective of Spain's heritage is on display with "Celtiberians: On the Trail of Numantia" at Soria's Numantino Museum in the Castilla y León region.

Visit Spain for eight days from $579, airfare and accommodation is included.

ROMANIA

The **fifteenth-century monasteries** in Bukovina in the northeast show man's artistry can be nature's equal. The Voronet Monastery, with its interior and exterior frescoes, dates from 1488 and is justly called the **Sistine Chapel of the East**. Four other vividly painted monasteries in northern Moldavia add to the allure of the region. While Bucharest, Romania's capital, is a city of tree-lined boulevards and imposing architecture, it is ninety miles north, in Transylvania, that some of Europe's **best-preserved medieval towns** lie like Brasov, Sibiu, and Sighisoara.

Modern sculpture lovers should not miss Constantín Brancusi's abstract works at Targu Jui in an outdoor setting.

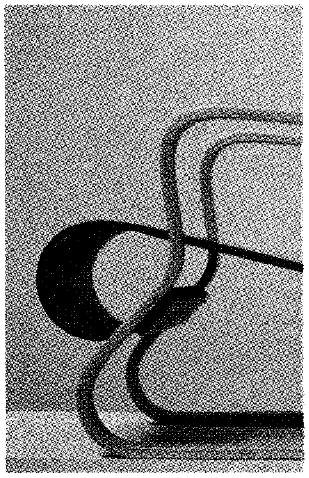
A five-day, three-night tour of Bucharest and Southern Transylvania including air transfers, accommodation, and transportation with private car is from $439.

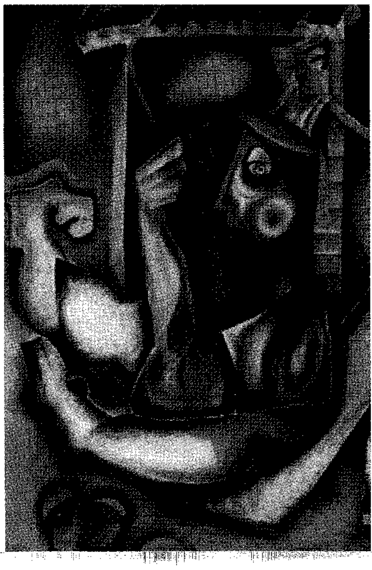
HUNGARY

On one side of Budapest's Danube sits Buda with its **houses from the Middle Ages**, while in Óbuda, Roman ruins reveal the city's age. In bustling Pest, there is the **opulence of nineteenth-century buildings** such as the majestic Opera House, designed by Miklós Ybl, and Ödön Lechner's Museum of Applied Arts, one of the finest examples of **Art Nouveau architecture**. Stay in the historic neoclassical Four Seasons Gresham Palace, built at the foot of the famous Chain Bridge and stroll through the Jewish quarter, Erzsébet Town, where the Byzantine-looking Dohány Street Synagogue is the second largest in the world.

From March 17–April 2, 2006, two hundred events featuring classical concerts, ballet, and art exhibitions take place during the Budapest Spring Festival.

Three nights in Budapest with two cultural performances start at $346.





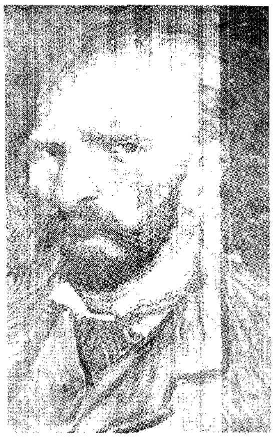
SWITZERLAND

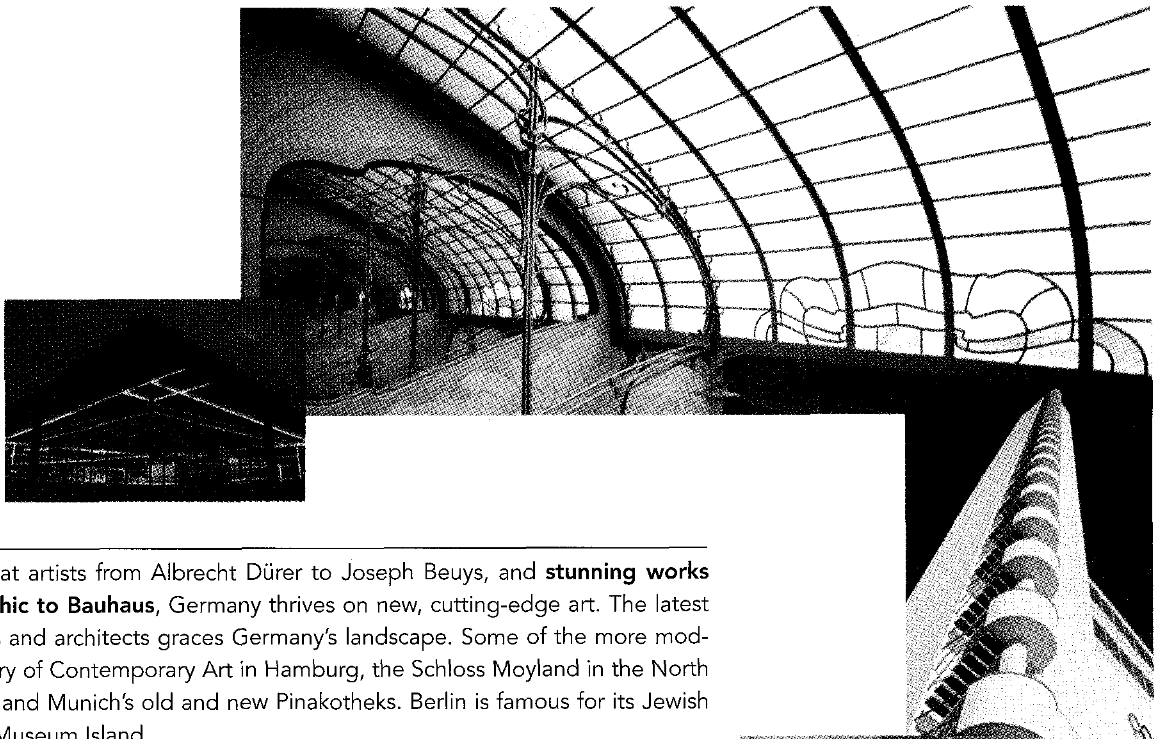
Although many come to Basel for the world's leading art fair, the city itself boasts an amazing **forty museums**. Renzo Piano designed the understated Beyeler Collection, which displays work by modern masters alongside African and Alaskan art. Through February 2006, the Foundation Beyeler will exhibit sixty works from the UBS Art Collection.

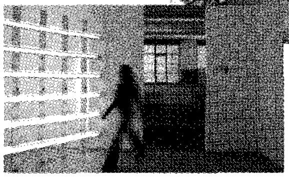
In the medieval city of Bern, the recently opened **Zentrum Paul Klee** houses 4,000 of the world's most important paintings, watercolors, and drawings by Klee as well as a wealth of biographical material. And in La Chaux-de-Fonds, the great architect **Le Corbusier** left behind masterpieces including the Maison Blanche, scheduled to open to the public soon.

A four-day tour of Basel, Bern, and Zurich is from $379.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO





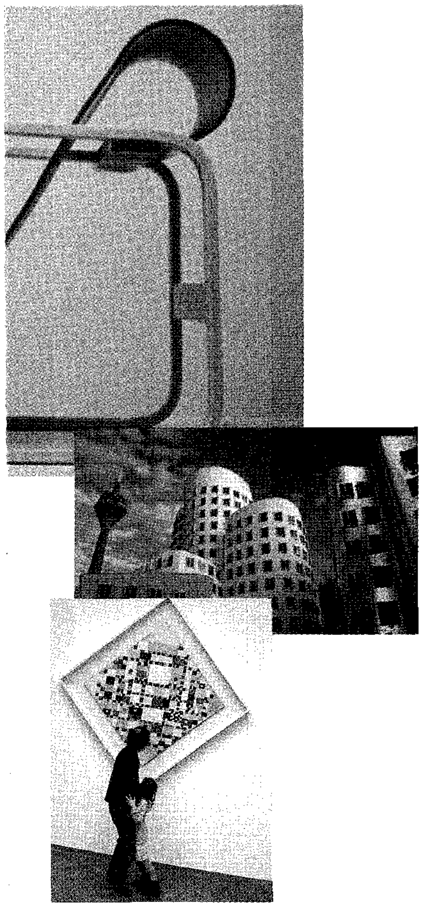


GERMANY

Home of centuries of great artists from Albrecht Dürer to Joseph Beuys, and **stunning works of architecture from Gothic to Bauhaus**, Germany thrives on new, cutting-edge art. The latest work of leading designers and architects graces Germany's landscape. Some of the more modern galleries are the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Hamburg, the Schloss Moyland in the North Rhine–Westphalia region, and Munich's old and new Pinakotheks. Berlin is famous for its Jewish Museum and the diverse Museum Island.

In 2006, Dresden, home of the impressive Zwinger Palace, will be the venue for a music festival hailing the 250th anniversary of Mozart's birth and legacy.

Four nights in three-star hotels along with roundtrip air from New York to Munich start at $499.



BELGIUM

Medieval Brugge is a must-see on any trip to Europe, while Brussels and Antwerp are **living museums** of great Art Nouveau architecture. The design of Victor Horta put its stamp on Brussels as Gaudí did on Barcelona. A perfect example is the inventive Comic Strip Museum. See also the Palais Stoclet, designed for a rich industrialist by Josef Hoffman in which dining room is the famous **Gustav Klimt frieze**. In Antwerp, **more than 170 Art Nouveau houses** can be viewed in the Zurenborg district.

To celebrate the 175th anniversary of the birth of this architectural style, "Art Nouveau and Design 1830–1985" is up through December 31, 2005 at the Royal Museums of Art and History.

A three-night stay including airfare begins at $399.

HOLLAND

For lovers of art and architecture, Holland is among the world's most alluring countries. Rembrandt, Steen, Vermeer, as well as other **master painters of the Golden Age** can be seen in the Rijksmuseum. While the Van Gogh Museum contains more than 700 works by the Impressionist. Famed for its **seventeenth-century houses**, architecture in Amsterdam continues to evolve: **The Eastern Docklands** are a fascinating mix of innovative modern residences, public works, and bridges that have energized the area and garnered international recognition.

Holland celebrates the 400th birthday of **Rembrandt** throughout Holland from December 15, 2005–February 4, 2007 with a unique program of exhibitions. The Van Gogh Museum will host a blockbuster Rembrandt – Caravaggio exhibition (February 24–June 18, 2006), a contrast between two geniuses of Northern and Southern Baroque art.

Six days in Amsterdam including airfare and accommodation starts at $399.

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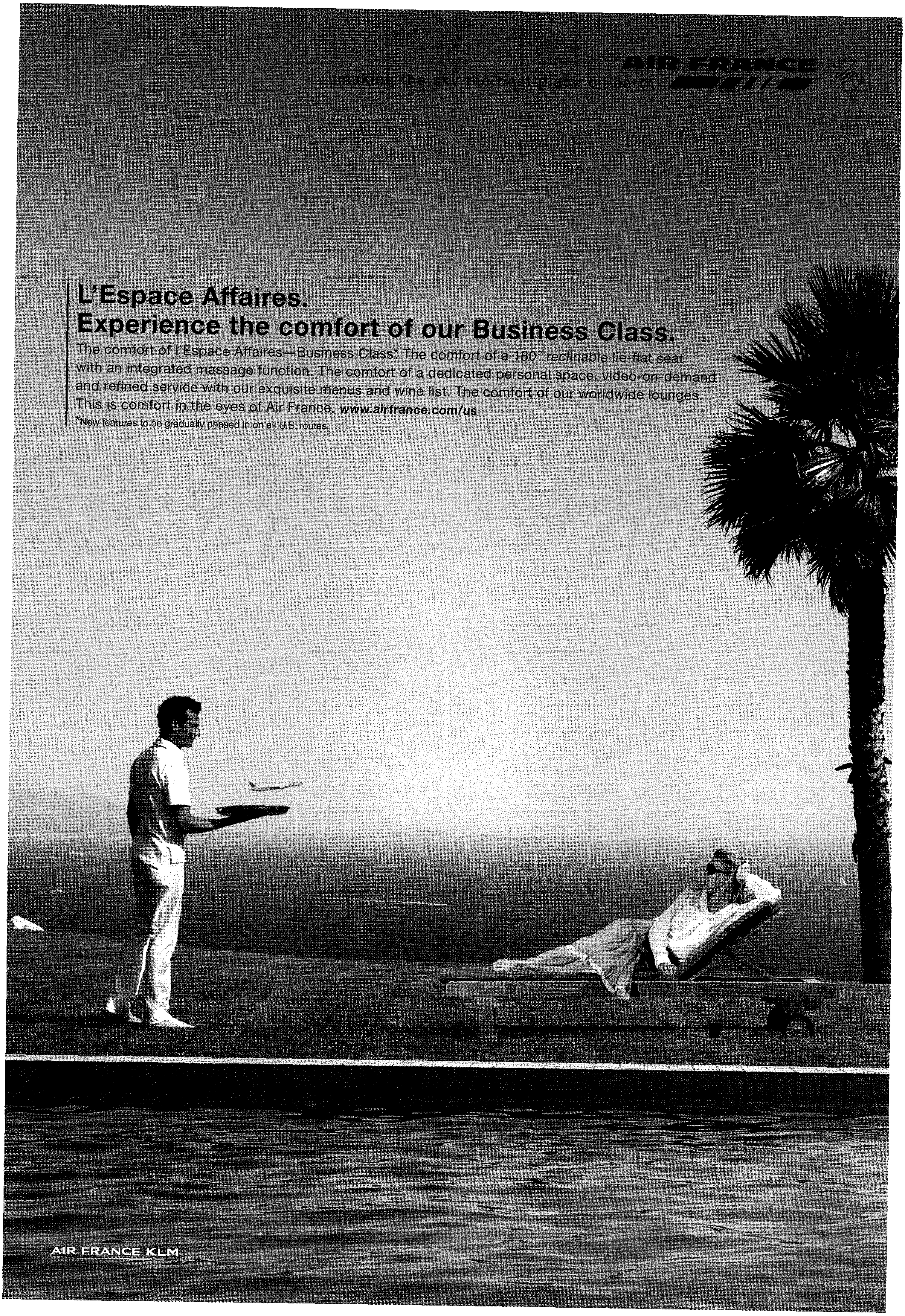
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court trial and a high-minded debate between, on one side, science and medicine and, on the other, faith and a belief in demons. It's a Bush-era debate—guess which side wins? We see flashbacks, in trashy horror-film style (clanking and whooshing soundtrack, creaking doors, dishes mysteriously falling off tables), to the anguish of a college girl (Jennifer Carpenter), who gets assaulted and torn apart by demons. In effect, for much of the film we are watching the torture of a young woman. Laura Linney and Campbell Scott huff and puff as opposing lawyers. Directed by Scott Derrickson.—*D.D.* (In wide release.)

FLIGHTPLAN

Jodie Foster stars as a grief-stricken aeronautical engineer travelling home to New York with her six-year-old daughter to bury her husband. When she awakes after a short nap and finds her child gone, none of the other passengers remember seeing the little girl, and it's up to Foster, in perfect closeup, to act up a storm and demand action. With gliding camerawork and amazing production design (the two-story aircraft was built by Alexander Hammond), the director, Robert Schwentke, gives Foster plenty of room in which to panic. But the film is seriously underwritten (even at ninety minutes) and devolves into a ludicrous finale.—*B.D.* (In wide release.)

THE 40-YEAR-OLD VIRGIN

Andy Stitzer (Steve Carell), whose Dickensian moniker suggests "stiff," "zipper," and "stitched," got a bad start as a teen-ager and is now so afraid of women he won't go near them. Andy's fellow-workers at a San Fernando Valley electronics store, played by Seth Rogen, Romany Malco, and Paul Rudd, are full of stupid schemes to help him, but they're even more screwed up in their relations with women than he is. Much of the comedy is coarse, obvious, and foulmouthed, but, within the broad license that the writer-director Judd Apatow allows himself, he works with considerable delicacy and a surprising sense of detail. Elizabeth Banks and Leslie Mann have good bits as predatory women who terrify the hero; Jane Lynch, as Andy's boss, breaks into a tender Guatemalan love song; and Catherine Keener, as a real woman (that is, loving, and also trouble), ends the infantile jokes and turns the movie into a romance. Carell collaborated on the script with Apatow.—*D.D.* (9/12/05) (In wide release.)

GOING SHOPPING

To save her business, Holly (Victoria Foyt), the proprietor of a chic little store that bears her name and sells her designs, has to raise three months' rent in a single weekend blowout sale. The collection of quirky characters in her orbit, including her plasticized mother (Lee Grant), a pair of mobsters (Robert Romanus and Joseph Feury), and a new young beau (Rob Morrow), come together at the intersection of their shopping habits. The director Henry Jaglom's pseudo-vérité technique wears thin, and his antic cast overexert themselves, but the story is held together by a true and moving idea: the shopper seeks not merely merchandise but a fictional identity, and the proprietor-designer is nothing less than the producer-director of wearable fantasy. The dizzily verbose script (co-written by Jaglom and Foyt) is as loose as improvisation, and the intercut video interviews with women about their shopping habits rise from irritating self-absorption to heart-stopping confession.—*Richard Brody* (Angelika Film Center and Metro Twin.)

GOOD NIGHT, AND GOOD LUCK

George Clooney's nifty account of Edward R. Murrow's historic prime-time assaults on Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, in 1954, imitates many of Murrow's best qualities—it's swift, elegant, grimly humorous, and effective. David Strathairn gets the suavely streamlined Murrow perfectly—the pomaded jet-black hair, the thick brows and unblinking eyes, the curt, rhyming syntax and firm emphasis. Celebrating the end of McCarthyism is only part of Clooney's game. His most serious intention appears to be to deliver a blow to the patella of a somnolent American press that, until recently, has indulged the Bush Administration's most extravagant smears and lies. He has completely succeeded. With Clooney himself as Murrow's partner, Fred Friendly, and Frank Langella as the CBS chairman William S. Paley. Robert Elswit did the black-and-white cinematography, which matches kinescopes of McCarthy's actual speeches.—*D.D.* (10/10/05) (In wide release.)

GRIZZLY MAN

The indefatigable Werner Herzog has made a brilliant documentary about an American saint and fool—Timothy Treadwell, a failed actor and California surfer who fell in love with the grizzly bears in Alaska and who spent a dozen summers with the bears, usually alone and always unarmed. Treadwell gave the seven-hundred-pound beasts such names as Mr. Chocolate and Aunt Melissa and rhapsodized over their steaming excrement, which he insisted on calling poop. All was well in this peaceable kingdom until October, 2003, when Treadwell and his girlfriend, Amie Huguenard, were attacked and devoured by a hungry long-nosed grizzly. When the hundred hours of video footage that Treadwell shot in the last five years of his excursions fell into Herzog's hands, the German filmmaker interviewed Treadwell's friends, ex-girlfriends, and a variety of naturalists and park-service officers and wove the footage into a startling meditation on nature and innocence. Herzog is properly respectful of Treadwell's courage and manic self-invention, but he interprets the American as an impatient misfit who relieved his misanthropy with neurotic protestations of love in the wilderness. The tormented Treadwell longs for harmony and doesn't seem to understand that death is at the center of any ecological balance, but Herzog, it turns out, has his own philosophical burdens: he sees nothing but death in nature. Neither man, it seems, is willing to admit that a bear is a bear is a bear.—*D.D.* (8/8 & 15/05) (Angelika Film Center.)

HARAKIRI

Feudal Japan is at peace, and starving out-of-work samurai beg to perform ritual suicide at the mansions of powerful clans—a request they hope will lead to a charitable pittance or a menial job. When one of them is forced to go through with harakiri, his father-in-law, a veteran swordsman (Tatsuya Nakadai), vows to expose the cruelty and hypocrisy of the warrior code. The film has a steady, hypnotic momentum; the director, Masaki Kobayashi, wrings as much drama out of facial twitches as he does out of sword fights. He's helped, immensely, by Nakadai's molten performance and Toru Takemitsu's spare, disquieting music. In Japanese. Released in 1962.—*Michael Sragow* (Walter Reade Theatre; Oct. 15 and Oct. 18.)

A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

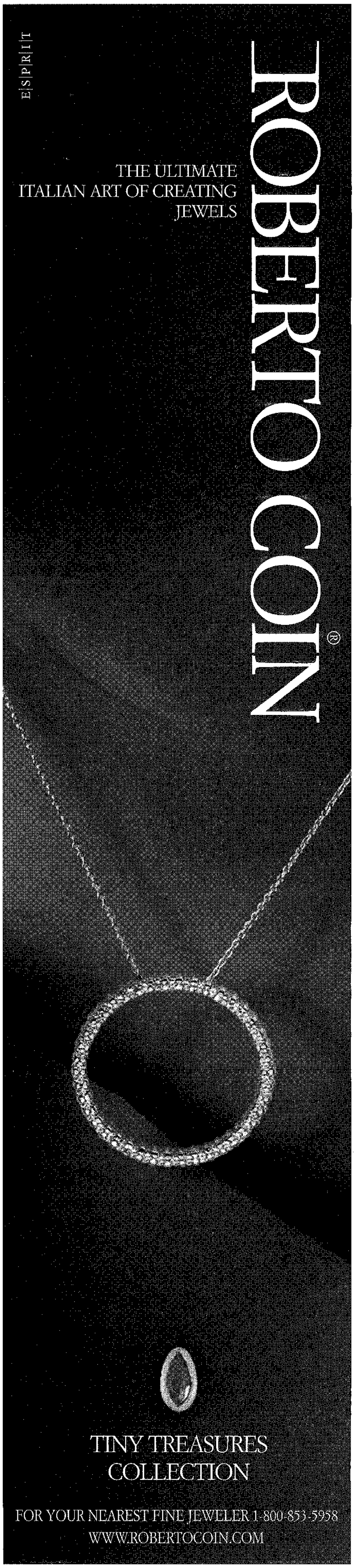
David Cronenberg's latest is a noirish story about a seemingly settled Indiana man, Tom Stall (Viggo Mortensen), who displays an unsuspected talent for violence when a couple of killers invade the café he runs in a small town. Soon after, a mobster from Philadelphia with a glass eye (Ed Harris) shows up and addresses Tom as "Joey." Is some sort of buried past taking over Tom's life? The movie asks us to believe that one man can carry two entirely different personalities within him and still be as sane as daylight. Cronenberg's direction, mirroring the split in Tom, is alternately measured and frighteningly explosive, and, as always, he gives the movie a nasty underlay of sexual perversity. With Maria Bello, Ashton Holmes, and, as still another Philadelphia mobster, William Hurt, who seems to be having a ball.—*D.D.* (In wide release.)

IN HER SHOES

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (In wide release.)

JUNEBUG

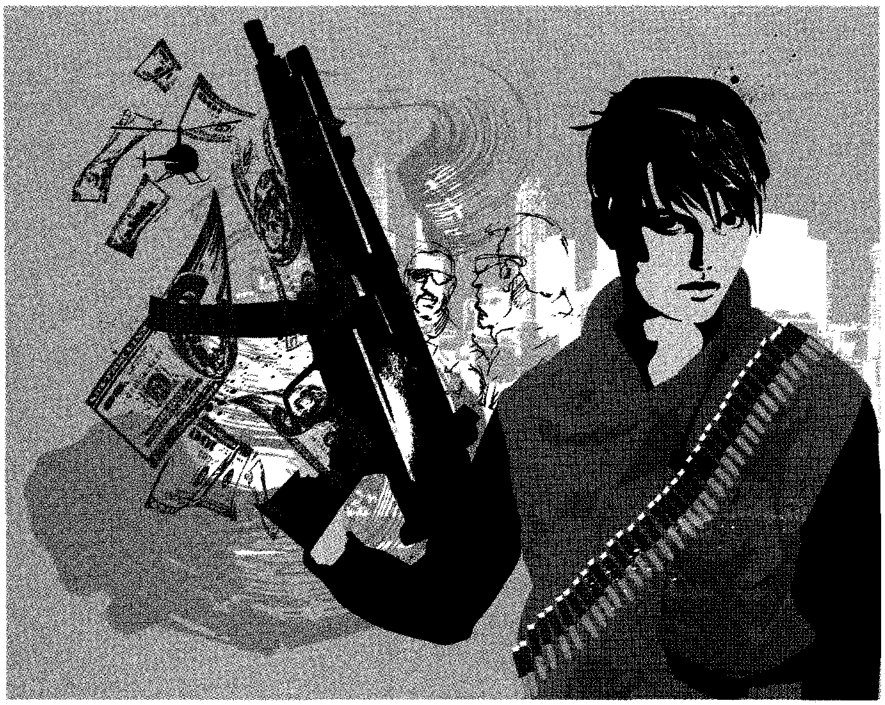
Meet the in-laws, North Carolina style. Phil Morrison's remarkably assured directorial début, about a cosmopolitan art dealer (Embeth Davidtz) who travels with her new husband (Alessandro Nivola) to his family home, is snarkily funny and unexpectedly moving. Set over a long weekend, the



story (by Angus MacLachlan) focusses on the interaction between Davidtz's somewhat floundering character and the members of her husband's complex family. There's an unhurried attention to detail that Morrison brings to the story which allows the crisp dialogue and deep characterizations room to breathe. The various narrative strands—the domineering mother (Celia Weston) who favors one son over another, the chatterbox sister-in-law (a luminous Amy Adams) who hungers for connection—come together to form a contemplative picture of a surprisingly fragile Southern family.—*B.D.* (Quad Cinema and 62nd & Broadway.)

JUST LIKE HEAVEN

Reese Witherspoon is clever and sprightly in this pseudo-romantic comedy about a woman in a coma who's suspended between life and the afterlife. Mark Ruffalo plays a lonely architect who is haunted by her when he sublets her apartment. The typical Odd Couple high jinks happily ensue, until the film turns disastrously into a right-to-life-support polemic. The director Mark Waters, who did nice work on "Freaky Friday" and "Mean Girls," moves the film along with flair, but the uneasy subtext (does anyone want to see a comedy about the Terri Schiavo case?) drains the fun out of it.—*B.D.* (In wide release.)



Keira Knightley stars as an unlikely bounty hunter in Tony Scott's new thriller, "Domino," which was inspired by a true story. Opening Oct. 14.

LILJA PUGGAARD

LORD OF WAR

A raffish, visually exciting entertainment about the rise of an arms dealer. Nicolas Cage, speaking in a new, self-confident voice, is Yuri Orlov, a Ukrainian-born hustler who grew up in Brighton Beach (he pretends to be a Jew when it's useful) and who then claws his way to the top of a sordid trade. Yuri easily bribes Soviet-made weaponry out of the hands of the military and then sells the guns and grenades to crumb-bum Third World dictators. He has a stake in African civil strife, a grotesque situation that the writer-director Andrew Niccol plays as exuberant black comedy. The movie is glib and over-explicit but also, in its cynical way, honest and morally outraged. With Bridget Moynahan as Yuri's fantasy bride, Jared Leto as his hysterical brother, and Ian Holm as a "moral" arms dealer—he sells to the good guys rather than to the dictators.—*D.D.* (9/26/05) (In wide release.)

MARCH OF THE PENGUINS

This hugely successful French documentary, directed by Luc Jacquet, yields itself so readily to anthropomorphic readings that it's hard to say where bird ends and man begins. As the emperor penguins shuffle across the terrain to their mating ground with bowed shoulders, they look, from the rear, like shtetl Jews heading off to shul. Flopping to their bellies for greater speed, they could be kids taking a wave on a surfboard. After they mate, the parents take care of the children with a selfless devotion that would not seem out of place in lacrosse-mom precincts like Glen Cove or Montclair. Yet here's the miracle: the extreme coldness and clarity of the air, and the translucent blues and searing whites of the landscape, lend the ritual, however mundane, familial, and instinct-driven, an aspect of eternal splendor. One of the most touching and eye-ravishing documentaries ever made.—*D.D.* (9/12/05) (In wide release.)

OLIVER TWIST

If you had to pick a director to make something new of Dickens's tale, Roman Polanski would be an obvious choice. His own early history, and the record of his films, seems rife with the required anxieties. All the more disappointing, then, that the outcome should verge on the staid. This Oliver (Barney Clark) looks angelic but stunned, and the menace purveyed by his various nemeses, including Mr. Bumble (Jeremy Swift) and even Fagin (Ben Kingsley), has a mild and manageable air. The novel works on you as unshakably as a bad dream, but such creeping fears descend on the film only with the arrival of Bill Sikes (Jamie Foreman) and Nancy (Leanne Rowe). Their kinship is an abusive parody of love, and its climax is suitably dire; mind you, when it comes to the bloody detail—Bill's dog yelping in a corner while Nancy is clubbed to death—Polanski simply picks the pockets of David Lean's version from 1948. If you crave concentrated Dickens, that deep-shadowed, offensive masterwork is still the one to catch.—*A.L.* (10/3/05) (In wide release.)

PIXOTE

A shockingly lyrical Brazilian film from 1980 about the life of abandoned children who learn to pick pockets and grab purses and hustle—it's their only way of surviving. Thrown into the reformatory, the ten-year-old Pixote watches as several of the larger boys gang-rape a kid not much older than he is, and his truculent baby face is indifferent, but he's a little camera taking it all in. A group of boys, including Pixote, break out, and he and three others snatch enough purses and wallets to make their way to Rio de Janeiro and begin dealing cocaine. Outsmarted by the adult criminals, the kids buy an aging, drunken prostitute from a pimp and go into business with her: she brings men home, and they rob them at gunpoint. As the director, Hector Babenco (who appears in a prologue), sees it, Pixote is a snub-nosed infant asserting his wants, and when they're denied he changes into a baby gangster—a runt Scarface, who kills innocently, in the sense that he doesn't understand the enormity of the crime. The thesis is too pat, but two of the characters—Lilica (Jorge Julião), a flamingly nellie seventeen-year-old transvestite homosexual, and the whore Sueli, the whoriest whore imaginable (Marília Pera)—transcend it. Dusky and aquiline-faced, Pera has an Anna Magnani-like presence—horrifying and great. Her display of passion wipes the little nonactor kids off the screen. She's the whore spawned out of men's darkest imaginings, and in her scenes the movie achieves a raw garish splendor. In Portuguese.—*P.K.* (Thalia Theatre; Oct. 16 and Oct. 18.)

PROOF

Catherine (Gwyneth Paltrow) appears to have inherited the mathematical gifts of her father, Robert (Anthony Hopkins). The question is, has he also handed down his fragility of mind? The kinship of brilliance and madness is not exactly the freshest topic for investigation, and John Madden's film, adapted from David Auburn's play, doesn't bring much to the party. There is suspense, of a kind, when a new mathematical proof of startling ambition—and uncertain provenance—is found in Robert's desk after his death, but apart from that the movie unfolds in a mood of worrisome glumness. When Catherine's non-geeky sister Claire (Hope Davis) arrives from New York for the funeral, we are meant to find her mean and brittle, but there is much to be said for her exasperation, and, as is so often the case, what struck theatre audiences as smart and provoking winds up onscreen looking smug. With Jake Gyllenhaal as a math graduate and part-time drummer, who would be well advised not to give up his day job.—*A.L.* (9/19/05) (In wide release.)

ROLL BOUNCE

In Chicago in 1978, Xavier (X) Smith (Bow Wow) and his crew of South Side roller-demons compete in a skate-off challenge against the North Side idol Sweetness (Wesley Jonathan) and his polyester posse. The director, Malcolm D. Lee, offers a nostalgic view of the village that it takes to raise a child and the hard work needed to keep a family together. A pair of tough and tender scenes between X and his widowed father, Curtis (Chi McBride), are so tear-jerkingly effective that they render the skating contest anticlimactic. Yet, for a film that celebrates the value of work, there's no sense of the self-imposed discipline of rehearsal required to make it to the top. Endearing actors (including Mike Epps and Charlie Murphy as wisecracking trash collectors), a funny script, and a mood of bittersweet sentiment are undercut by simplistic resolutions.—*R.B.* (In wide release.)

SERENITY

Joss Whedon, the creator of "Buffy, the Vampire Slayer," gives the big-screen treatment to his other, short-lived series, a rollicking Western set in outer space. The movie adaptation is necessarily exposition-heavy, as characters are reintroduced and new ones are added, but its witty, action-packed story is effortlessly entertaining. The wisecracking crew (Nathan Fillion and Gina Torres, among others) of the spaceship Serenity are rebel fighters out to wreak havoc on the devious plans of the tyrannical Alliance. The lo-fi look of the film makes it play like a schoolyard yarn, in which the evil bullies get their eventual comeuppance.—*B.D.* (In wide release.)

THUMBSUCKER

Justin (Lou Pucci), a pale, slender seventeen-year-old, withdraws from his dissatisfied mom (Tilda Swinton), his inarticulate, self-disappointed father

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THE ART OF BEING GLOBAL - *Paula Polito - SVP of Marketing, Merrill Lynch Global Private Client Group*

An architect of change, Ms. Polito and her team transformed marketing for The Bull from an approach focused primarily on stocks and bonds to one of comprehensive wealth management, symbolized in the U.S. by Total Merrill℠. Here, she offers insights on everything from succeeding in the worldwide marketplace to the etiquette of getting into a cab in Japan.

The global marketplace is open 24/7 - it makes sleep a valuable commodity. Doing business globally is more real-time than ever before. My life adjusted to the global marketplace - people in my position - we all take calls in the middle of the night. Of course, there are major benefits to this; real-time global business makes everyone more dedicated, creates strong partnerships, and equips us all to take immediate advantage of opportunities.

To open markets, you need an open mind. Cultural differences are real and offer important opportunities to learn. For instance, when I get into a cab in New York, it's automatic for me to close my own door. So imagine my surprise when I first visited Tokyo, many years ago, and I reached for the door and was immediately scolded. I realized that if a little thing like a cab door can be so different, and matter so much, other differences - far more important differences - would need to be considered.

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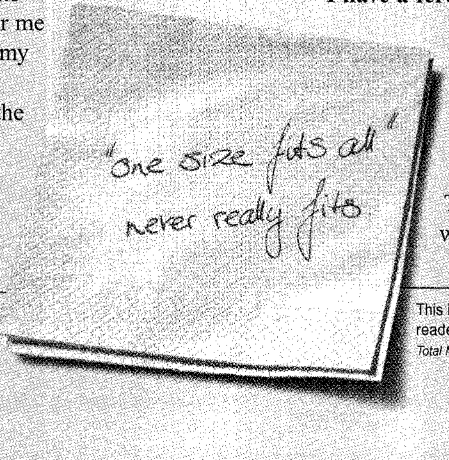
I have a ferocious appetite for global knowledge, in the biggest and smallest senses of the word. The Financial Times helps satisfy that appetite. It covers the globe but is divided intuitively into regions. It is a useful mix of financial and geopolitical news that is sorted in a concise, logical and very insightful way.

The Financial Times helps me do business the way I want to do business.



This is one in a series of reflections by leading marketers, who are also regular readers of the FT. The series can also be found at FT.com/toolkit/globalview
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A global view for a global world

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(Vincent D'Onofrio), and just about everyone at school by hoisting his thumb and dreaming. Mike Mills, working with Walter Kirn's 1999 novel, has contributed yet another movie to the coming-of-age genre, but Mills's gentle touch brings out the humor and hidden tensions in the undramatic material. Vince Vaughn, Keanu Reeves, and Benjamin Bratt give amusing performances as stumbling adults who don't provide Justin with much in the way of role models.—*D.D.* (9/26/05) (In wide release.)

TIM BURTON'S CORPSE BRIDE
Tim Burton returns with another stop-motion-animation movie that's both beautiful and a bit disturbing to watch. The nineteenth-century period piece, about a shy and clumsy pianist (voiced by Johnny Depp) who accidentally becomes engaged to a dead woman (Helena Bonham Carter) longing for love, is darkly designed in script and in production, and thoroughly intriguing. After the Corpse Bride drags the pianist to the spectacularly colorful Land of the Dead, the remainder of the film, about his escape from the underworld, is both poignant and exciting. A gothic comedy about Victorian repression may not be the most welcoming of kids' fare, but there's a verve and effervescence to the movie that makes it seem like a musical version of an Edgar Allan Poe story, and Danny Elfman's fanciful score is a blast. Co-directed by Mike Johnson.—*B.D.* (In wide release.)

WALLACE & GROMIT: THE CURSE OF THE WERE-RABBIT
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (In wide release.)

Also Playing

BALZAC AND THE LITTLE CHINESE SEAMSTRESS: Cinema Village. **DANDELION:** Sunshine Cinema. **LITTLE MANHATTAN:** In wide release. **THE PRIZE WINNER OF DEFIANCE, OHIO:** In wide release. **THE SQUID AND THE WHALE:** Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. **TWO FOR THE MONEY:** In wide release. **WAITING:** In wide release. **THE WAR WITHIN:** Sunshine Cinema.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—"New Filmmakers Goes Shakespearian." Oct. 12 at 8: "Measure for Measure" (2002, Neil McGarry). ♦ "Goethe-Institut New York Presents." Oct. 13 at 8: "Imperative" (1982, Krzysztof Zanussi; in Polish). ♦ "New Museum Presents." Oct. 14 at 7:30: "Point of View: An Anthology of the Moving Image," a program of short films from 2003. ♦ "Logos Film Lectures." Oct. 15 at 1: "General Idi Amin Dada: A Self-Portrait" (1974, Barbet Schroeder; in French), followed by a talk with the journalist Christian Parenti. ♦ "Special Presentation: Verso Books." Oct. 15 at 4: "Antonio Negri: A Revolt That Never Ends" (2004, Alexandra Weltz and Andreas Pichler). ♦ Second New York Butoh Festival Film Series. Oct. 15 at 6 and Oct. 16 at 7: "O, Kind God!" (2003, Gianni Di Capua). ♦ Oct. 15 at 8 and Oct. 16 at 6: "Vermillion Souls" (2005, Masaki Iwana; in Japanese). ♦ Oct. 16 at 3:45: "Just Visiting This Planet" (1991, Peter Sempel). ♦ "New Filmmakers Goes Punk." Oct. 18 at 8: "Jericho's Echo: Punk Rock in the Holy Land" (2005, Liz Nord). ♦ "Storefront Films." Oct. 18 at 7:30: "Rani Radovi/Early Works" (1969, Zelimir Zilnik; in Serbo-Croatian).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100)—"The Next Director: Apichatpong Weerasethakul." All films are in Thai. Oct. 13 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "The Adventures of Iron Pussy" (2003). ♦ Oct. 14 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Mysterious Object at Noon" (2000). ♦ Oct. 15 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "Blissfully Yours" (2002). ♦ Oct. 16 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Tropical Malady" (2004). ♦ Sneak preview. Oct. 17 at 7: "The Syrian Bride" (2004, Eran Riklis; in Arabic, English, Hebrew, Russian, and French). ♦ "Zhang Yimou Triad." Oct. 18 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Shanghai Triad" (1995; in Mandarin).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—In revival. Oct. 12-13 at 2, 3:40, 5:30, 7, 8:40, and 10:15: "Pickpocket" (1959, Robert Bresson; in French). ♦ Oct. 14-18 at 1, 2:50, 4:40, 6:30, 8:20, and 10:10: "Mouchette" (1967, Bresson; in French).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—"Cinéma Tuesdays." Oct. 18 at 12:30 and 6:30: "Under Satan's Sun" (1987, Maurice Pialat; in French). ♦ Oct. 18 at 3:30 and 9: "Police" (1985, Pialat; in French).

IFC CENTER
323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—"Weekend Classics." Oct. 14-16 at noon: "Bed and Board" (†). ♦ "Waverly Midnights." Oct. 14-15: "Velvet Goldmine" (1998, Todd Haynes). ♦ "Stranger Than Fiction," a documentary series. Oct. 18 at 7:30: "When Mother Comes Home for Christmas" (1996, Nilita Vachani; in Greek).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—"Early Autumn: Masterworks of Japanese Cinema from the National Film Center, Tokyo." All films are in Japanese. Oct. 12 at 6: "Tears on the Lion's Mane" (1962, Masahiro Shinoda). ♦ Oct. 12 at 8:15: "The Moderns" (1952, Minoru Shibuya). ♦ Oct. 15 at 2: "The Ballad of Narayama" (1958, Keisuke Kinoshita). ♦ Oct. 15 at 4:30: "Sisters of the Gion" (1936, Kenji Mizoguchi). ♦ Oct. 16 at 1:30: "Monday Girl" (1964, Ko Nakahira). ♦ Oct. 16 at 3:30: "Bad Boy" (1961, Susumu Hani). ♦ Oct. 16 at 5:30: "Irezumi" (1966, Yasuzo Masumura). ♦ Through Oct. 23: "Rebels with a Cause: The Cinema of East Germany." All films are in German. Oct. 12 at 6 and Oct. 15 at 6:15: "Working Life: Five Documents," a series of films (1974-1987). ♦ Oct. 12 at 8: "Your Unknown Brother" (1982, Ulrich Weiss). ♦ Oct. 13 at 6: "The Second Track" (1962, Joachim Kunert). ♦ Oct. 13 at 8: "The Bicycle" (1981, Evelyne Schmidt). ♦ Oct. 14 at 6 and Oct. 16 at 5:30: "Born in '45" (1966, Jürgen Böttcher). ♦ Oct. 14 at 8 and Oct. 17 at 6: "The Gleiwitz Case" (1961, Gerhard Klein). ♦ Oct. 15 at 8:15: "Berlin—Schönhauser Corner" (1957, Klein). ♦ Oct. 16 at 2: "The Architects" (1990, Peter Kahane). ♦ "Louis Feuillade: A Sampling of a Master." Oct. 13 at 6:15 (episodes 1-5), Oct. 14 at 6:15 (episodes 6-10), and Oct. 15 at 2 (episodes 1-10): "Barrabas" (1919; silent). ♦ Through Nov. 23: The films of Isabelle Huppert. Oct. 17 at 7: "Gabrielle" (2005, Patrice Chéreau; in French), with appearances by Huppert and Chéreau.

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—"Black Light: Films from the African Diaspora." Oct. 14 at 7:30: "Smart Black People" (2005, Nelson George), with an appearance by George. ♦ "Unseen Cinema: Early American Avant-Garde Film 1894-1941." Oct. 15 at 2: "Experimental Treasures from the World's Leading Archives," films by Edison, American Biograph, and Mary Ellen Bute, among others. ♦ Oct. 15 at 4: "Restoring the Early American Avant-Garde." ♦ Oct. 16 at 2: "Picturing a Metropolis: NYC Unveiled." ♦ Oct. 16 at 4:30: "Light Rhythms: Melodies and Montages." ♦ Repertory nights. Oct. 15 at 7:30 and Oct. 16 at 6:30: "Jules and Jim" (1962, François Truffaut; in French).

SUNSHINE CINEMA
143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182)—Midnight movies. Oct. 14-15: "Cannibal Holocaust" (1980, Ruggero Deodato).

THALIA THEATRE
Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—"Children in the 20th Century." Oct. 16 at 4 and Oct. 18 at 8:15: "Pixote" (†). ♦ Oct. 16 at 6:30 and Oct. 18 at 6: "Gloria" (1980, John Cassavetes).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—"The Beauty of the Everyday: Japan's Shochiku Company at 110."

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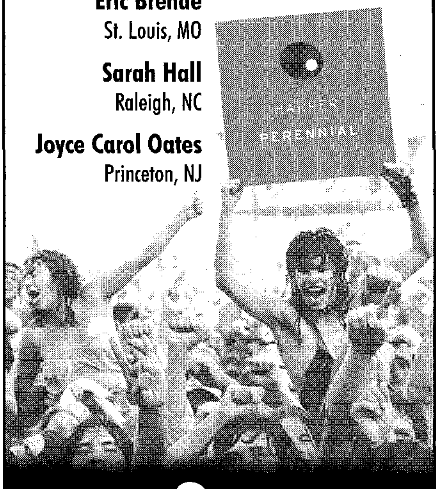

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All films are in Japanese. Oct. 12 at 2 and 6:15: "To Your Majesty Mr. Emperor" (1963, Yoshitaro Nomura). ♦ Oct. 12 at 4 and 8:15: "The Ki River" (1966, Noburu Nakamura). ♦ Oct. 13 at 1:30 and 7:30: "Tora-San, Our Lovable Tramp" (1969, Yoji Yamada). ♦ Oct. 13 at 3:20 and 9:20: "Where Spring Comes Late" (1970, Yamada). ♦ Oct. 13 at 5:30 and Oct. 15 at 9:15: "Violent Cop" (1989, Takeshi Kitano). ♦ Oct. 14 at 1 and 6:30 and Oct. 16 at 6:30: "Vengeance Is Mine" (1979, Shohei Imamura). ♦ Oct. 14 at 3:45 and 9:15 and Oct. 16 at 9:15: "Fall Guy" (1982, Kinji Fukasaku). ♦ Oct. 15 at 1:30 and 6:30 and Oct. 18 at 8:40: "Harakiri" (†). ♦ Oct. 15 at 4:10 and Oct. 17 at 4:20 and 8:50: "Sting of Death" (1990, Kohei Oguri). ♦ Oct. 16 at 1: "The Castle of Sand" (1974, Yoshitaro Nomura). ♦ Oct. 17 at 2 and 6:30: "My Sons" (1991, Yoji Yamada). ♦ Oct. 18 at 2 and 6:30: "Black Angel Vol. 1" (1997, Takeshi Ishii). ♦ Oct. 18 at 4: "Face" (2000, Junji Sakamoto).

READINGS AND TALKS

WALLACE STEGNER FELLOWS READING
Three veterans of Stanford University's creative-writing program—Tobias Wolff, Ryan Harty, and Julie Orringer—offer selections from their work. (New York Society for Ethical Culture, 2 W. 64th St., at Central Park W. Oct. 14 at 6:30. For reservations, call 212-300-1808.)

"TWO YEARS BEFORE THE MAST"
In 1834, at the age of nineteen, Richard Henry Dana, Jr., exchanged a place of privilege at Harvard for a spot in the fo'c'sle aboard a brig bound from Boston to California by way of Cape Horn. His account of the seafaring life is a classic; on Oct. 15 at 2 the South Street Seaport Museum presents a dramatic reading from it on the deck of the tall ship Peking. (Pier 16. For more information, call 212-748-8735.)

"REBEL VOICES NOW AND THEN"
A bilingual program of contemporary Polish poetry and modern Yiddish verse, organized by the international online literary magazine *Words Without Borders,* features the Polish actress Elżbieta Czyżewska reading from the work of Ryszard Krynicki, Krystyna Miłobędzka, Marcin Sendecki, and Adam Wiedemann, along with an appearance by the scholar Amelia Glaser, who will read from and discuss her recent book, "Proletpen: American Rebel Yiddish Poets," which features newly translated works by Sarah Barkan, Menke Katz, Moyshe Nadir, and others. (Bowery Poetry Club, 308 Bowery, at Bleecker St. Oct. 16 at 2. For more information, visit www.wordswithoutborders.org.)

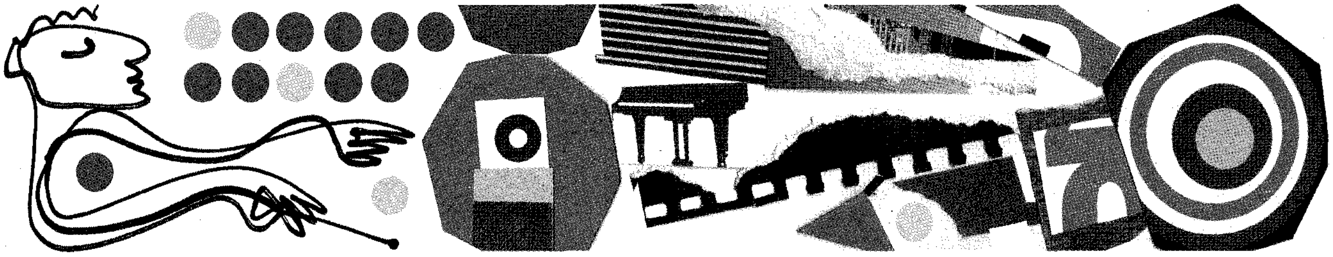
"CARTOONISTS IN CONVERSATION"
David Sipress, a longtime *New Yorker* cartoonist, interviews his colleague Roz Chast. (Makor, 35 W. 67th St. 212-415-5500. Oct. 16 at 4.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"WALK THE TUNNEL"
A twenty-two-day march on Washington to call attention to the AIDS epidemic presents a rare opportunity to cross from Manhattan to New Jersey by foot, beneath the Hudson River. This event, organized by the advocacy group Campaign to End AIDS, starts with a rally in Times Square and then continues through the Lincoln Tunnel, which will be closed to traffic. Ferries, trains, and buses are available for the return trip. (Oct. 15 at 7:30 A.M. For more information, visit www.walkthetunnel.com.)

"CREATIVITY NOW"
Tokion, an American magazine with roots in Japan that describes itself as the "*National Geographic* for our pop-culture generation," organizes this conference each year, drawing figures from the worlds of art, music, advertising, journalism, film, and television to talk about their work. The participants this time around include the singer Antony (see Night Life), the filmmaker Todd Haynes, and the painter and photographer Richard Prince, among many others. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Oct. 15-16. For more information, visit www.tokion.com.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES
In his photography, Richard Avedon developed a style that was iconic, monumental, and unadorned. But at home he pursued a different aesthetic: a peripatetic collector, he took pleasure in the small, the whimsical, the cluttered, and the curious. As **Sotheby's** sale (on Oct. 14) of items from his estate reveals, his eye for décor was as versatile as it was attuned to detail, and he could revel in odd and deliciously distracting juxtapositions—an animal-bone bottle stopper carved to resemble a skull, an Eiffel Tower decanter, a signed Picasso lithograph, illustrations by Catlin and Audubon. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.) ♦ After offering an impressive conclusion to its photography sales on Oct. 12, **Christie's** holds an auction of musical instruments on Oct. 14, including a 1940 Gibson Arch-Top electric guitar from 1940 and a violin circa 1687 by Andrea Guarneri. Two sales of furniture and decorative art works follow on Oct. 18. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.)



LAURIE ROSENWALD

ON THE HORIZON

CLASSICAL MUSIC
LAST ROUND
Nov. 3-5

Daniel Barenboim, the gloriously unpredictable pianist, conductor, and cultural provocateur, is in his final season as the music director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He brings the group to Carnegie Hall for its annual residency, three concerts that will include works by Mozart, Schubert, Carter (a New York première), and Schoenberg and the Fifth Symphonies of Bruckner and Mahler. (212-247-7800.)

NIGHT LIFE
ARABIAN NIGHTS
Nov. 4-6

Highlights of the forthcoming Mahrajan Al-Fan Festival of Arab Arts include the New York début of Tunisia's Sonia M'Barek, who is famed in the Arabic world for her take on *maluf,* traditional Tunisian court music, and Egyptian music from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (212-545-7536.)

ART
"SEVEN EASY PIECES"
Nov. 9-15

For six nights at the Guggenheim, Marina Abramović will re-create body-art and performance works by artists like Bruce Nauman, Vito Acconci, and Joseph Beuys. The seventh evening features a new piece by Abramović herself. (212-432-3500.)

MOVIES
ROWLANDS TRIBUTE
Nov. 10-20

The grande dame of the indies, Gena Rowlands has been one of America's finest screen actresses since her first collaboration with her husband, John Cassavetes, in 1963. BAM pays tribute to Rowlands with a program that includes more than a dozen films and a Q. & A. session with the actress on Nov. 10, following a screening of Cassavetes's "A Woman Under the Influence." (718-636-4100.)

THE THEATRE
PARTY TIME
Nov. 14

The New Group ("Avenue Q") presents the New York première of "Abigail's Party," the film director and playwright Mike Leigh's acrid satire of British suburbia in the seventies. Jennifer Jason Leigh stars and Scott Elliott directs. This is the first production of the group's tenth-anniversary season. (212-279-4200.)

ART, INSIDE AND OUT

Here is a selective survey of some of the country's most architecturally interesting art museums, listed by state.

CALIFORNIA: LOS ANGELES

GETTY CENTER
1200 Getty Center Dr. (310-440-7300)—Richard Meier's complex, which was fully completed in December, 1997, feels rich, and that's because it is: rich in views (it's built on a hilltop overlooking the Pacific Ocean, the Santa Monica Mountains, and greater Los Angeles), rich materially (the buildings are clad in an almost golden Italian travertine veined with fossilized plants and feathers), and rich in its collections. A shining example of the purist aesthetic, set far away from urban streets and surrounded by gardens, the Getty can feel a bit like an Eden for art. ♦ **"Titian and the Commander: A Renaissance Artist and His Patron"** is organized around a recent Getty acquisition, Titian's "Portrait of Alfonso d'Avalos," from 1533. Through Feb. 5. ♦ **"Julius Shulman, Modernity and the Metropolis"** honors the photographer's ninety-fifth birthday, and the Getty's acquisition of his archives. Through Jan. 22. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 6, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9.)

LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART
5905 Wilshire Blvd. (323-857-6000)—Renzo Piano, the go-to guy for museums seeking a face-lift or an expansion, has been hired to unite and make sense of LACMA's lacklustre six-building campus. Perhaps not coincidentally, the museum recently hosted "Renzo Piano & Building Workshop: Selected Projects," an exhibit that explored Piano's design philosophy and his body of work. That show, which has closed in Los Angeles and will now travel to two other Piano-designed institutions—the High Museum, in Atlanta (from Nov. 12 to April 2), and the Nasher Sculpture Center, in Dallas (from May 6 to Aug. 7)—was accompanied by a smaller local exhibit, "Transforming LACMA," which displayed Piano's studies and models for the revamped museum. ♦ The travelling blockbuster **"Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs"** is on loan from the Egyptian National Museum, in Cairo. Through Nov. 15. (Open Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, noon to 8, Fridays, noon to 9, and Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 8.)

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART
250 S. Grand Ave. (213-626-6222)—Arata Isozaki's 1986 design unites diverse materials (copper, onyx, red granite, Indian sandstone, and aluminum) and geometric elements (cubes, pyramids, and cylinders fitted together like puzzle pieces). In the courtyard, one of Nancy Rubins's lumbering yet delicate constructions of recycled airplane parts defies gravity. The museum has two satellite branches, the Pacific Design Center (8687 Melrose Ave.) and the Geffen Contemporary (152 N. Central Ave.), a former police-car garage retrofitted by Frank Gehry. ♦ **"Ecstasy: In and About Altered States,"** a group of psychedelically oriented works by some thirty artists, including Pipilotti Rist, Glenn Brown, and Roxy Paine. At the Geffen through Feb. 20. (Open Mondays and Fridays, 11 to 5, Thursdays, 11 to 8, and Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

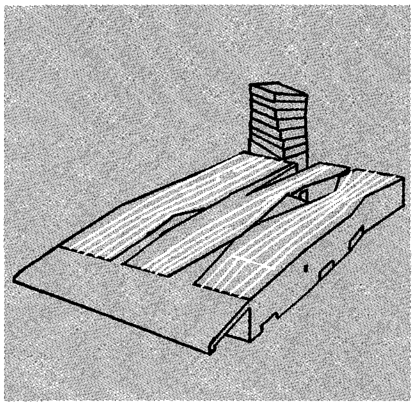
LAURENT CILLUFFO

CALIFORNIA: PASADENA

NORTON SIMON MUSEUM
411 W. Colorado Blvd. (626-449-6840)—When Thornton Ladd and John Kelsey designed this museum, which was completed in 1969, they covered its curved exterior in deep-umber tiles, as a nod to the Craftsman architecture of houses nearby. In the nineties, Frank Gehry was hired to reconfigure the interiors. He added red Indian-sandstone galleries for Asian art, and increased the amount of natural light with higher ceilings, larger skylights, and pale limestone floors. ♦ **"An Assortment of Beauties: Japanese Woodblock Prints Collected by Frank Lloyd Wright."** Through Jan. 9. ♦ **"Durga: Avenging Goddess, Nurturing Mother."** Art from India, Nepal, Tibet, and Southeast Asia depicting Hindu goddesses. Through March 27. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, noon to 6, and Fridays, noon to 9.)

CALIFORNIA: SAN FRANCISCO

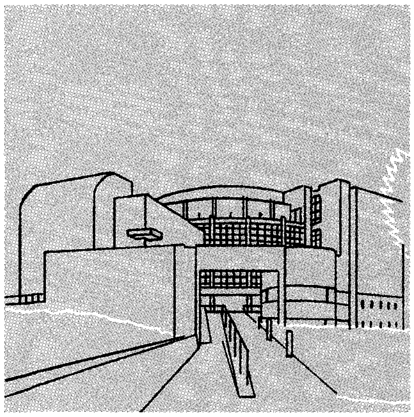
DE YOUNG MUSEUM
50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Dr. (415-863-3330)—The history of the de Young is one of building and rebuilding. The original structure remained behind after the California Mid-Winter Exposition, in 1894, and opened as a museum in 1895, only to be damaged in the earthquake of 1906. Expansions were added in 1919, 1925, and 1931; the original part of the museum was condemned as unsafe in 1926. Then, in 1989, following the Loma Prieta earthquake, the entire museum was again damaged, which led to its demolition, in 2000. The latest incarnation of the de Young, designed by Herzog & de Meuron, will open on Oct. 15. The building is covered in dimpled, perforated copper, which is patterned like the dappled shade under a tree canopy and will develop a patina over time. A series of interior courtyards and a sculpture garden further anchor the building in its wooded setting, in Golden Gate Park. Five artists—Gerhard Richter, Kiki Smith, Ed Ruscha, James Turrell, and Andy Goldsworthy—were commissioned to make site-specific pieces for the new museum. ♦ The inaugural exhibition will be **"Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh."** Through Feb. 5. (Starting at noon on Oct. 15, the museum will be open for thirty-two hours straight, with free admission. After that, the hours will be Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5.)



COLORADO: DENVER

DENVER ART MUSEUM
100 W. 14th Ave. Parkway (720-865-5000)—The museum, founded in 1893, is now undergoing a major expansion, with a new main building designed by Daniel Libeskind that is scheduled to open in the fall of 2006. ♦ **"Blanket Statements,"** an exhibition of Navajo textiles. Through Dec. 31, 2006. ♦ **"Floating Time V2-12 Marine Blue,"** a video installation by Tatsuo Miyajima. Through Dec. 31. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5, Wednesdays, 10 to 9, and Sundays, noon to 5.)

GEORGIA: ATLANTA



HIGH MUSEUM OF ART
1280 Peachtree St. N.E. (404-733-4400)—Richard Meier designed the museum's current home, which opened in 1983. The curvy, light-filled building, sheathed in white enamelled-steel plates, became the Southeast's most important museum, but it also became cramped, and Renzo Piano was commissioned to design three new buildings that will add a hundred and seventy-seven thousand square feet of gallery and office space. The additions are scheduled to open on Nov. 12. ♦ Currently on view, **"The Indian Gallery of Henry Inman,"** nineteenth-century portraits of Southeastern Native Americans. Through March 12. ♦ From Nov. 3 to April 2, **"Renzo Piano & Building Workshop: Selected Projects,"** a retrospective of the architect's work in museum design. ♦ When Piano's additions to the High open, they'll be joined by the retrospective **"Andrew Wyeth: Memory & Magic."** (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5, and Sundays, noon to 5.)

IOWA: DAVENPORT

FIGGE ART MUSEUM
225 W. 2nd St. (563-326-7804)—David Chipperfield's hundred-thousand-square-foot design for the new Figge opened on the banks of the

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
THE BIG BUILD

When Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin was finished, in 1999, its first exhibit was itself. The building was opened to the public more than a year before the curators got around to putting anything inside. The empty structure attracted hordes of visitors, and it became a metaphor for the role of architecture in museums now, an admission that the container often seems to matter more than the contents. The Denver Art Museum, Libeskind's first freestanding project in the United States, will open next year, and its titanium-clad exterior is almost done. There are no plans to unveil this one without any art, so now is the time to go to Denver if you want to think about architecture without distraction. Libeskind has designed the museum as a series of immense, crystalline shapes, pointed shards that joust with the modernist castle of Gio Ponti's older wing. Even though the interior will have flat floors and at least some straight walls, it is hard to believe that the architect's presence will not be front and center. Now you can enjoy Libeskind's crisp, angular shapes without the guilt of ignoring the art.

—Paul Goldberger

uses primarily natural light, which comes in through a glass ceiling and diffuses throughout the museum. The permanent collection includes works by nearly all the usual suspects of modern sculpture (Rodin, Picasso, Arp, Moore, Giacometti, Brancusi, and Oldenburg, to name just a few), and there is also a one-and-a-half-acre sculpture garden designed by Peter Walker. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5, and Thursdays, 11 to 9.)

TEXAS: FORT WORTH

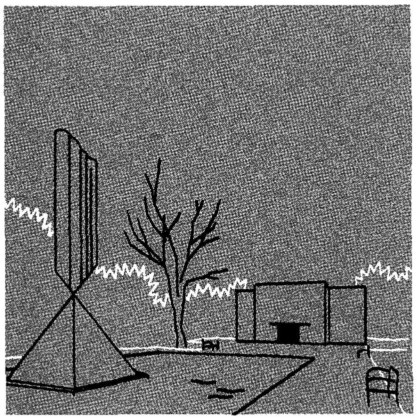
AMON CARTER MUSEUM
3501 Camp Bowie Blvd. (817-738-1933)—Philip Johnson brought his decorative classicism to Texas in 1961, in the form of this porticoed building made from local shell-stone and granite, glass, and bronze. Other additions, both by Johnson, came in 1964 and 1977. Then, in 1998, it was decided that more drastic measures were required. Johnson was called in again, and the museum was closed, reopening in October, 2001—forty years after Johnson first finished it—with an additional fifty thousand square feet. ♦ **"In the American West: Photographs by Richard Avedon"** presents seventy-eight works from a series that the museum commissioned in 1979. Through Jan. 8. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5, Thursdays, 10 to 8, and Sundays, noon to 5.)

KIMBELL ART MUSEUM
3333 Camp Bowie Blvd. (817-332-8451)—In the years since its opening, in 1972, this museum, the last Louis Kahn building completed under the architect's watch (he died in 1974), has often been singled out as one of America's best examples of what museum architecture should be. Its ceiling is vaulted and punctuated with skylights, its foundation is terraced to accommodate the uneven site, and its gallery spaces are easily reconfigured for different types of exhibitions. The museum's permanent collection, built around Kay and Velma Kimbell's original holdings of mostly eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British art, has expanded to include antiquities and twentieth-century work, and pieces from Asia, South America, and Africa. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and Saturdays, 10 to 5, Fridays, noon to 8, and Sundays, noon to 5.)

MODERN ART MUSEUM OF FORT WORTH
3200 Darnell St. (817-738-9215)—Tadao Ando may be the only self-taught architect to have won the Pritzker Prize, but his work is in no way naïve. The Japanese architect's design for the M.A.M. marries an awareness of Texas landscape (glass panels allow for abundant natural light and views of the water and trees outside) and scale (these are the largest modern-art galleries in the U.S. outside of New York City) with an almost ethereal Eastern aesthetic. Glass-walled galleries seem to float on a one-and-a-half-acre pool, and vaulting Y-shaped concrete supports are like minimalist trees. ♦ **"Anselm Kiefer: Heaven and Earth"** surveys the German artist's work from 1969 to the present. Through Jan. 8. ♦ **"Picasso: The Vollard Suite."** Through Jan. 15. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 7, Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5, and Sundays, 11 to 5.)

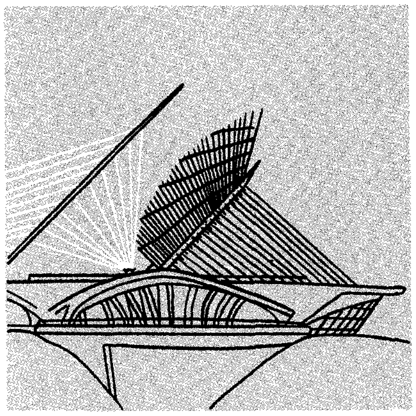
TEXAS: HOUSTON

MENIL COLLECTION
1515 Sul Ross (713-525-9400)—Set among a group of dove-gray bungalows (the Menil Collection is the landlord of the people who live in them), Renzo Piano's structure is threaded with skylights, interior gardens, atriums, and windows, flooding it with natural light. The octagonal Rothko Chapel, nearby, originally designed by Philip Johnson and completed by Howard Barnstone and Eugene Aubrey, has become a pilgrimage site for art lovers, who come to admire Mark Rothko's color-field paintings and Barnett Newman's "Broken Obelisk." ♦ **"The Surreal Calder"** examines the artist—best known for his colorful mobiles—in the context of Surrealists like Max Ernst, Joan Miró, and Yves Tanguy, through such sculptures as the mechanized "Goldfish Bowl" (1936), "Apple Monster" (1938), and "Wooden Bottle with Hairs" (1948). Through Jan. 8. ♦ Robert Gober co-curates **"The Meat Wagon,"** an exhibition that mixes works from the permanent collection with Gober's own installations. Opens Oct. 28. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 7.)



WISCONSIN: MILWAUKEE

MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM
700 N. Art Museum Dr. (414-224-3220)—Santiago Calatrava's iconic design for the Quadracci Pavilion, which functions as the museum's entrance, is now the largest object in the museum's collection, and draws the biggest crowds. A hundred-ton sunscreen, which looks like a pair of enormous white sails or bird wings, is spread above the sides of the building in the morning and is lowered in the afternoon, with one ponderous flap at noon to say hello to visitors. Beneath the sunscreen, the ceilings in the pavilion soar to ninety feet. The galleries that extend beyond have little to do with the showstopper of an entrance; they are fairly traditional and functional, and serve as a simple background to the art. ♦ **"Rembrandt and His Time: Masterworks from the Albertina, Vienna"** includes twenty-seven prints and drawings by Rembrandt himself; Milwaukee is the show's only venue. Through Jan. 8. ♦ **"John Szarkowski: Photographs,"** a retrospective of work by the Wisconsin native and legendary MOMA curator. Through Jan. 1. (Open daily, 10 to 5, and Thursdays, 10 to 8.)



LEFT: RICCARDO VECCHIO; RIGHT: LAURENT CILLUFFO

Mississippi River in August of this year. The new building is a disciplined, subdued minimalist box encased in glass, which casts a gentle glow and reflects the sky and water around it. ♦ **"41° North/90° West: Contemporary Landscape."** Through Dec. 11. ♦ **"The Great American Thing: Modern Art and National Identity, 1915-1935."** The title of this show, cribbed from a Georgia O'Keeffe observation, refers to artists' search for an authentically American style. Through Jan. 1. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5, and Thursdays, 11 to 9.)

MASSACHUSETTS: BOSTON

ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM

280 The Fenway (617-566-1401)—This museum, which opened its doors to the public on January 1, 1903, still bears the stamp of its patron. Gardner oversaw its planning and construction, down to the installation of a Roman mosaic floor in a courtyard and the inscription of the motto "C'est Mon Plaisir" over the entrance, and the collection (which she put together with the advice of the scholar Bernard Berenson) and its display are still as she designated them. An artist-in-residence program, in place since 1992, and plans for an addition designed by Renzo Piano have helped freshen the museum, but it still hews closely to Gardner's vision. ♦ **"Variations on a Theme by Sol LeWitt and Paula Robison."** LeWitt created a new wall drawing for this collaborative project; Robison, an artist-in-residence, contributes flute music by Mozart, performed in the gallery daily. Through Nov. 13. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

MINNESOTA: MINNEAPOLIS

WALKER ART CENTER

1750 Hennepin Ave. (612-375-7600)—The Swiss architecture team of Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, who are also responsible for the de Young Museum, in San Francisco, designed the new Walker, which opened this April. The shiny-skinned, airy complex includes, in addition to galleries, a theatre, a cinema, a library, and two restaurants. ♦ **"House of Oracles: A Huang Yong Ping Retrospective."** Sculptures and installations by the contemporary Chinese artist. Opens Oct. 16. ♦ **"Andy Warhol/Supernova: Stars, Deaths, and Disasters, 1962-64"** presents twenty early silk screens. Opens Nov. 13. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5, and Thursdays and Fridays, 11 to 9.)

MISSOURI: KANSAS CITY

NELSON-ATKINS MUSEUM OF ART

4525 Oak St. (816-751-1278)—The Nelson-Atkins, which has resided in its Beaux-Arts building since it first opened, in 1933, is undertaking its first expansion, with a new wing designed by Steven Holl, scheduled to open in the spring of 2007. The museum, which is known for its Asian art and its sculpture (its holdings include a significant group of Henry Moore bronzes), plans to use the new building to house its collections of African art, contemporary art, and photography. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10 to 4, Fridays, 10 to 9, Saturdays, 10 to 5, and Sundays, noon to 5.)

MISSOURI: ST. LOUIS

CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM

3750 Washington Blvd. (314-535-4660)—Like Cincinnati's Contemporary Arts Center, St. Louis's Contemporary has no permanent collection, a situation that can be just as complicating as it is liberating when one is trying to decide what a museum should be. Brad Cloepfil, a principal architect of Allied Works Architecture, responded to the challenge with a long, low building with concrete walls overlaid with steel mesh, and industrial-looking galleries that can comfortably adapt to different scales and media. As Cloepfil intended, the building suggests "a specific spatial presence, an intentional vacancy that achieves meaning through the art itself." ♦ **"Cindy Sherman: Working Girl"** presents photographs and video from early in Sherman's career, including when she was an art student at Buffalo State College. Through Dec. 31. ♦ A second show of photography and video, **"Girls' Night Out,"** focusses on work created in the past decade by artists such as Katy Grannan, Sarah Jones, and Shirana Shahbazi. Through Dec. 31. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5, Thursdays, 10 to 8, and Sundays, 11 to 4.)

PULITZER FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS

3716 Washington Blvd. (314-754-1850)—Across a courtyard (containing Richard Serra's thirteen-foot-high torqued spiral "Joe") from the Contemporary is the Pulitzer Foundation. The two-story concrete building, designed by Tadao Ando, first housed Emily and Joseph Pulitzer's collection of modern art, and now hosts temporary exhibitions. The U-shaped structure, arranged around a reflecting pool and topped on one side by a ruff of bamboo, is, despite a modest austerity, immodestly ravishing. "Blue Black, 2001," a twenty-eight-foot-tall wall sculpture by Ellsworth Kelly, is prominent here; like Serra's "Joe," it was commissioned especially for the building. ♦ **"Minimalism and Beyond,"** which includes works by Rachel Whiteread, Barnett Newman, Donald Judd, and Robert Gober, among others, opens on Oct. 14. (Open Wednesdays, noon to 5, and Saturdays, 10 to 4; reservations are required for groups of five or more.)

NEVADA: RENO

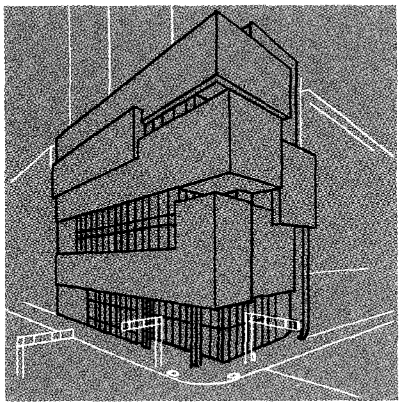
NEVADA MUSEUM OF ART

160 W. Liberty St. (775-329-3333)—Will Bruder's new building, which opened in 2003, is smoothly and cannily integrated into its surroundings—the four-story structure frames views of the Sierra Nevadas, and is clad in sheets of black zinc, echoing the black rock formations in the nearby high desert. ♦ **"Dalibor Martinis: Variable Risk Landscape."** A video installation that uses measurements of stock-market fluctuations to create a fictional landscape. Through Nov. 27. ♦ **"Frederic Tchorbadjian: Quantic Visit."** Drawings based on the artist's detailed study of numbers and patterns. Through Dec. 11. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5, and Thursdays, 10 to 8.)

OHIO: CINCINNATI

CONTEMPORARY ARTS CENTER

44 E. Sixth St. (513-345-8400)—Zaha Hadid's design for the Lois and Richard Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Art reinforces the idea of the museum as public space: the sidewalk outside is indistinguishable from the lobby floor, which then curves up to form the building's back wall. Above, concrete blocks dart up and out, seeming to float over the glass-enclosed lower level. It's handsome and modern, transcending its initial resemblance to the Whitney, in New York, and it's the only completed building in the U.S. by Hadid, who won the 2004 Pritzker Prize. ♦ **"Guy Ben-Ner: Honey, I Shrunk the Kids."** The Israeli artist's faux-naïf videos address topics like "Moby-Dick" and ostrich migration. Through Jan. 8. ♦ Four Tony Oursler video-projection pieces are in the lobby through April. (Open Mondays, 10 to 9, Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 6, and Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)



OHIO: COLUMBUS

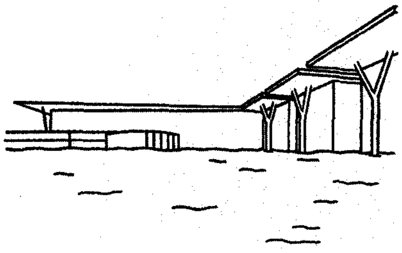
WEXNER CENTER FOR THE ARTS

1871 N. High St., on the Ohio State University campus (614-292-3535)—When Peter Eisenman's scaffolding-clad building opened, in 1989, it caused a sensation; some loved it for its eclectic references, and others reviled it as too busy and distracting. Its detractors seemed justified when, just a few years later, it was stricken with leaks, cracks, and problems regulating light, humidity, and temperature. On Oct. 30, after a $15.8-million renovation (the original construction cost $43 million), the center will reopen. ♦ **"Part Object Part Sculpture,"** which will trace the history of post-Second World War sculpture, will include Josiah McElheny's blown-glass model of the big bang, titled "An End to Modernity." Opens Oct. 30. (Open Mondays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6, Thursdays and Fridays, 9 to 8, Saturdays, 11 to 8, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

TEXAS: DALLAS

NASHER SCULPTURE CENTER

2001 Flora St. (214-242-5100)—Raymond Nasher, who made his fortune in the Dallas area building housing and then commercial properties, has become one of the world's premier collectors of modern sculpture. For years, Nasher and his late wife, Patsy, exhibited their sculptures in the plazas and gardens of the buildings they developed around Dallas. Then Nasher decided to unite his collection in a state-of-the-art sculpture museum. The result, a fifty-five-thousand-square-foot building designed by Renzo Piano, which opened in 2003,



LAURENT CILLUFFO

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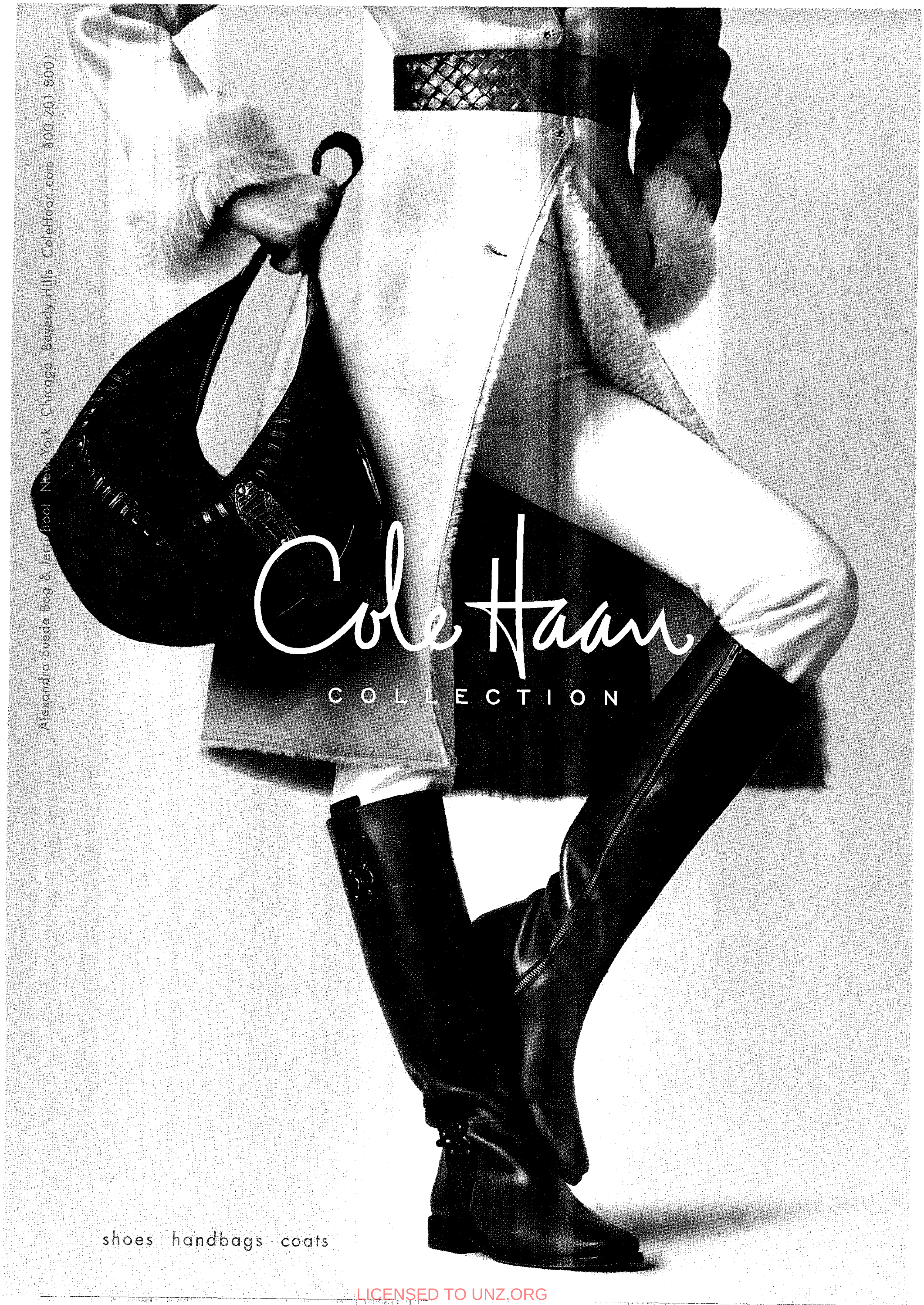
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THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

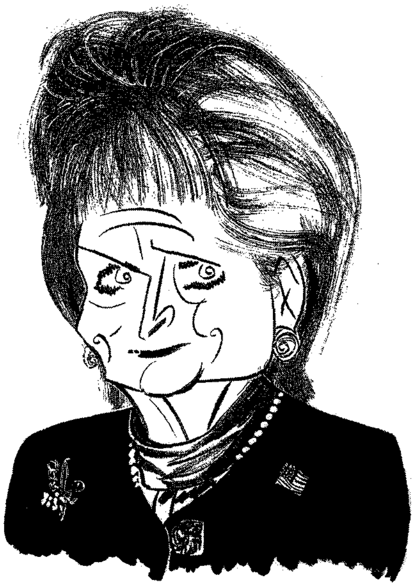
COMMENT

QUAGMIERS

It's early yet, but plumbing the depths of Associate Justice-to-be (or not to be) Harriet E. Miers, if there are any, promises to have more in common with archeology than with law. Figuring out who she is, and what she would be likely to bring to the Supreme Court, will be like deducing the life story of some mid-level functionary of an ancient Pharaoh's court from a few shards of pottery found in the rubble of a looted tomb.

The papyrus trail, in other words, is sparse. That was said to be true also of John Roberts, now Chief Justice of the United States. But Roberts, by comparison, was as thoroughly footnoted as a stack of doctoral theses. The vanloads of Roberts-related material that the National Archives delivered to the Senate Judiciary Committee added up to more than eighty thousand pages. For Harriet Miers, vans will not be required. There's nothing in the Archives, because she is not known to have ever done a day's work in any branch of the national government before she joined George W. Bush's White House staff, in 2001. If there is anything interesting in the written record of her White House service, "executive privilege" will keep it safely out of sight. Before that, apart from a late-nineties stint as head of the Texas Lottery Commission under then Governor Bush, she devoted herself to the interests of corporate clients (and of Bush, from the earliest flaps about his National Guard service right up through the Florida recount). When it comes to overt indications of what she thinks about the Constitution, though, there's no use frisking her. She's clean.

Since inferences are all there will be to go on, every shard that is brought to the surface will be examined with a view to teasing out the maximum possible meaning. Within a day of Miers's nomination, excavators hit what looked like pay dirt. The excitable Drudge Report topped its headline with an animated rotating siren, the equivalent of "Extra!": "HARRIET MIERS SUPPORTED FULL CIVIL RIGHTS FOR GAYS AND LESBIANS." Merciful heavens!



Drudge had picked up the item from *Time's* site, to which it had bubbled up from the Human Rights Campaign, the gay advocacy group. It turned out to refer to a short questionnaire sent out by the Lesbian/Gay Political Coalition of Dallas to candidates for city office in 1989, the year that Harriet Miers, in her only foray into public service outside the direct patronage of George W. Bush, was elected to a single two-year term on the city council. Sure enough, to the question "Do you believe that gay men and lesbians should have the same civil rights as non-gay men and women?" she had answered "Yes."

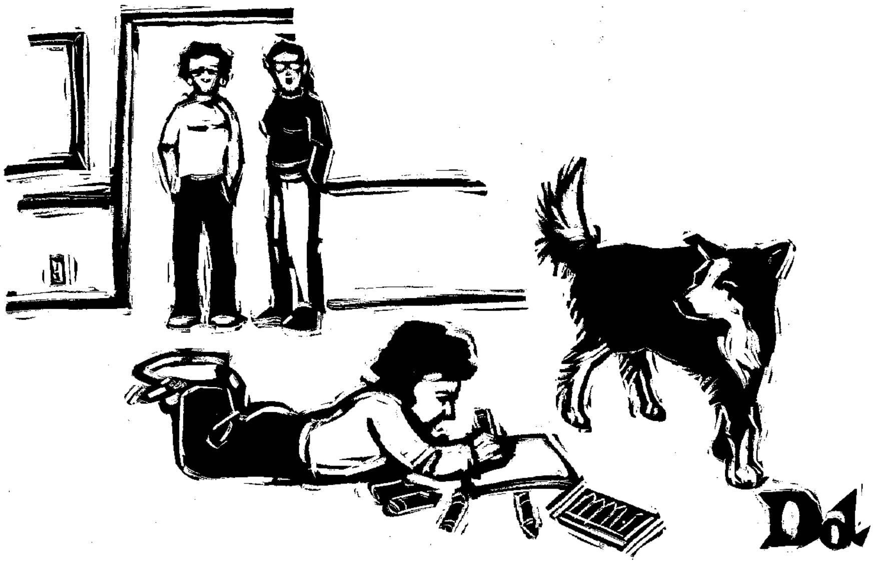
But then hardly anyone is for depriving gays of civil rights—just "special rights." And this:

> Do you, as an individual citizen, support repeal of Section 21.06 of the Texas Penal Code which criminalizes the private sexual behavior of consenting adult lesbians and gay men?
> *No.*

Section 21.06 happens to be the same law that the Supreme Court struck down two years ago in Lawrence v. Texas. Justice Clarence Thomas, one of the three who voted to uphold it, nevertheless wrote that it was "silly," adding, "If I were a member of the Texas Legislature, I would vote to repeal it." Or, as Drudge might headline it: "HARRIET MIERS SUPPORTED 'SILLY' LAW THAT EVEN THOMAS WANTS TO REPEAL."

Elsewhere in the questionnaire,

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL



"Ever since we got the Border collie, he colors within the lines."

• •

Miers showed a talent for evasion that will no doubt serve her well in her confirmation hearings. Would she support increased funding for AIDS services? "Yes, assuming need and resources." Lots of wiggle room there. Would she favor city ordinances prohibiting discrimination based on AIDS/H.I.V. status? "I prefer a legislative solution to the issues raised by these questions." How about job discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation? "I believe that employers should be able to pick the best qualified person for any position to be filled considering all relevant factors." Why mention "relevant factors" in this context, if sexual orientation isn't one?

At his press conference the day after announcing Miers's nomination, President Bush vouched again and again for her character ("I know her heart"), her credentials ("she's eminently qualified"), and her ideology ("she shares my philosophy"). Yet, as he spoke, a significant section of the leadership of the American right was in open revolt, and his words did nothing to quiet the rebellion. "I'm disappointed, depressed, and demoralized," wrote William Kristol, the editor of the *Weekly Standard*. "Her selection will unavoidably be judged as reflecting a combination of cronyism and capitulation on the part of the President." David Frum, Bush's "axis of evil" ex-speechwriter, didn't bother to hide his scorn. "In the White House that hero worshipped the President, Miers was distinguished by the intensity of her zeal," he wrote. "She once told me that the President was the most brilliant man she had ever met." George F. Will flourished his elegant blade: "It is important that Miers not be confirmed unless, in her sixty-first year, she suddenly and unexpectedly is found to have hitherto undisclosed interests and talents pertinent to the Court's role." Nor was the revolt limited to the conservative intelligentsia. "I'm not comfortable with the nomination," said Senator Trent Lott, of Mississippi. Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum was withholding its support. So was Gary Bauer's Christianist outfit, American Values.

If conservative unhappiness persists to the point of pushing a half-dozen Republican senators into opposition—a suddenly thinkable eventuality—then the support of a like number of their colleagues across the aisle will be Miers's only route to confirmation. The Democrats' dilemma will be acute. They may hope, mirroring the fear of Bauer et al., for "another Souter." That is extremely unlikely. "I know her well enough to be able to say that she's not going to change, that twenty years from now she'll be the same person with the same philosophy that she is today," Bush pleaded at his press conference. He's probably right, even though Miers used to be a Democrat and a Catholic and now she's a Republican and a Protestant. (Perhaps Bush subscribes to a kind of evangelical Brezhnev Doctrine, under which being born again admits of no retreat.) Sinking Miers's nomination would give Democrats the satisfaction of dealing Bush a defeat while at the same time striking a blow against the intellectual degradation of the Court. But Bush's next nominee would almost certainly be both more distinguished and more provably, fearsomely right wing. To fracture the formula of a founding father of modern conservatism, mediocrity in the defense of moderation isn't much of a vice. And excellence in the pursuit of extremism is certainly no virtue.

However the Miers nomination turns out, the fact that Bush submitted it is an unflattering reflection on his character. In the Federalist No. 76, Alexander Hamilton writes that the Senate's role in confirming appointments is designed to make the President

> both ashamed and afraid to bring forward, for the most distinguished or lucrative stations, candidates who had no other merit than that of coming from the same State to which he particularly belonged, or of being in some way or other personally allied to him, or of possessing the necessary insignificance and pliancy to render them the obsequious instruments of his pleasure.

Hamilton was no naïf about human nature, but in the present case his formula seems to have underestimated the Presidential capacity for both shamelessness and—well, courage isn't quite the right word. Arrogance.

—*Hendrik Hertzberg*

URBAN MYTHS
ELEVATOR HACK

No one much likes it when something—an empty cab, an out-of-service subway train, summer—goes by without stopping. It's like a tiny taste of death. This thought came to mind recently when a rumor surfaced about a clever elevator trick. Supposedly, if an elevator passenger simultaneously presses the "door close" button and the button for the floor he is trying to reach, he can override the requests of other passengers

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and of people waiting for the elevator on other floors. The elevator shifts into express mode, racing directly to the floor of his choosing—becoming, in essence, a private lift. Apparently (that is, according to Internet chatter and what you might call secondhand anecdotal evidence), people (pizza men, college students, hotel guests) have been doing this for years, which might explain why the rest of us have occasionally had the feeling that elevators were passing us by.

The experts, however, say that the idea is nonsense, that elevators are not designed to do this, that people are talking crazy. "It's just not so," Charles Buckman, an elevator and escalator consultant in North Carolina, said the other day. "If it happens, it's just happenstance." He went on, "There's no linkage in the control system between the door-control system and the floor-call system. Saying that one affects the other, that's like saying people in America eat hot dogs, so therefore people in Africa eat hot dogs."

Richard Gladitz, a service manager at Century Elevator, an elevator-maintenance company in Long Island City, concurred. "It really shouldn't operate like that, unless there's something wrong with it," he said. "People will think that someone did something to make it pass by, but it might have something to do with the dispatcher, various elevator-bank issues, something of that nature."

He was apprised of a case involving a woman in an elevator (manufactured by Gurney and serviced by Century) in a prewar apartment building on the Upper East Side who found that she could override the requests from other floors by holding the "door close" button as the elevator passed those floors, the fleetingly perplexed faces of spurned neighbors visible through a window in the door. Gladitz sighed and said, "There's so many misconceptions about elevators." Could it be that engineers had designed elevators to have this door/floor feature but, for the common good, didn't want civilians to know about it? Might there be an elevator conspiracy? Gladitz laughed and said, "You know what? As you're passing through buildings, going about your daily business, give it a shot."

What with daily business usually restricted to only two buildings, special business was devised, starting with a mid-morning visit to Bloomingdale's: six elevators, controlled by a vintage Westinghouse Selectomatic Mark IV call system. A few preliminary rides proved unsuccessful; people got on and off, regardless of attempts to override them. But then suddenly the overrider found himself hurtling up and down from the ninth floor to the lower level, repeatedly, without being stopped in between. Success? It was hard to know. How could a man be sure that other passengers were even there? From the ratio of shoppers to elevators, he might conclude that they were not. The same epistemological problem persisted at the next test site, the Peninsula hotel, where elevator abundance and guest scarcity made it possible to race up and down without interruption.

To the office, then. A desultory last-ditch attempt to hijack the ride up failed, but at lunchtime, just for kicks, the overrider, boarding a downbound elevator occupied by three other passengers, who had pressed a couple of buttons, tried again, pressing "door close" and "16." The illuminated buttons all went dark. For a few seconds, the elevator didn't move. It had been reset. It was there for the taking, but, amid hijacker indecision, the elevator took control of itself, and started going up instead of down.

The passengers were alarmed. "What's going on? Are we going up?"

"Don't worry," they were told. "This is research."

"How about doing it after hours?" one said.

"I'm really hungry," another said.

"Research?" said a third. "O.K., I'm doing research on breasts. Take off your shirts."

More passengers boarded on twenty-three. Buttons were pressed, but the overrider struck again, and again the panel went blank. The maneuver was executed a few more times, until mutiny seemed imminent. ("I want to get off right now.")

These findings were put to the experts. "That shouldn't have happened," Gladitz said, evenly. "That's kind of an oddball thing."

"There's something wrong with the elevator," Buckman said.

Sure there is.

—Nick Paumgarten

SUMMER VACATION
DANIEL, IN MASS.

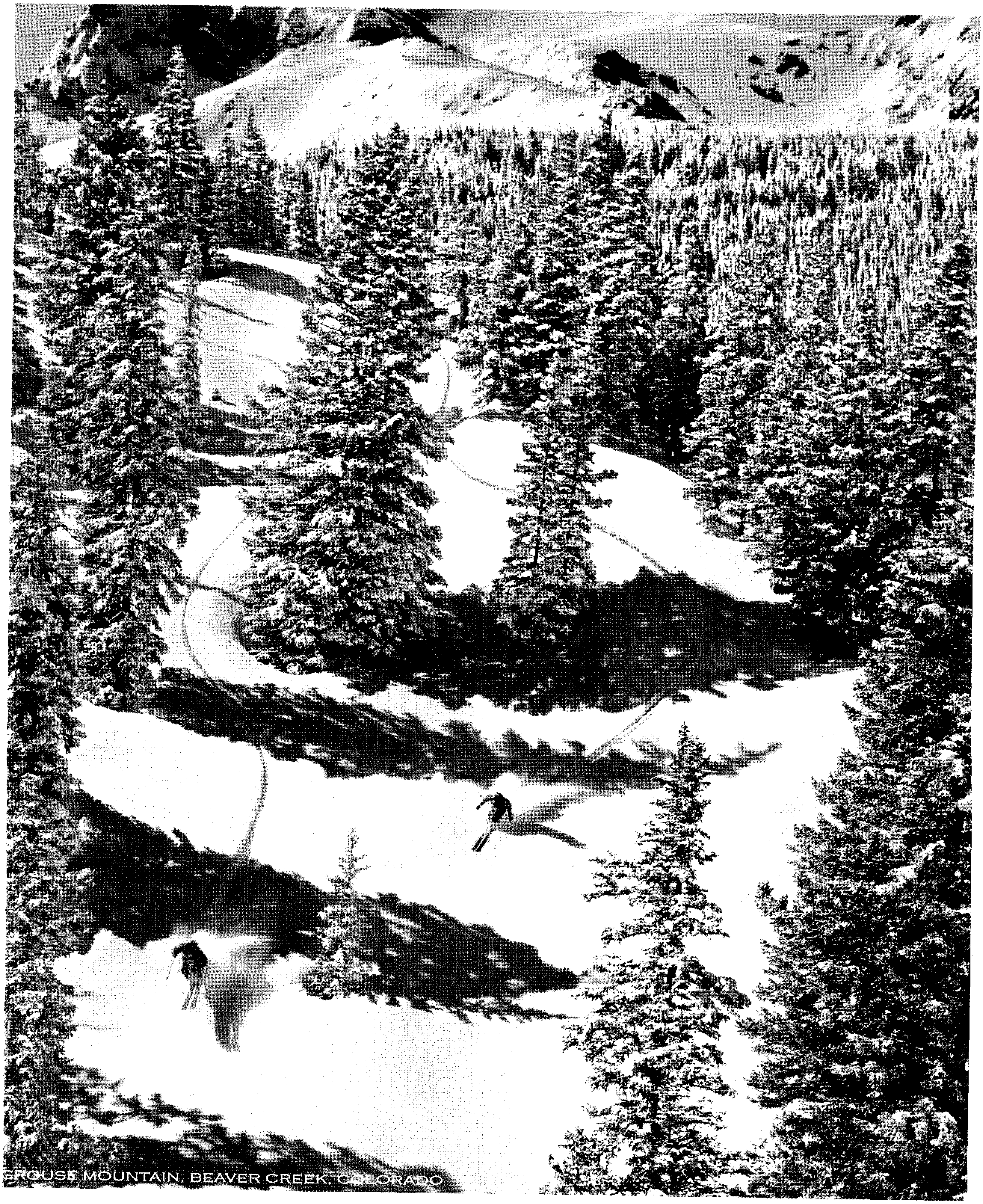
Daniel Lippman spent the summer at his parents' house, in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, balancing light proofreading duties at the community newspaper with the more demoralizing demands of a grocery-store clerkship. Daniel is fifteen. He had just finished his freshman year at Hotchkiss. Like many boys his age, Daniel has an Internet habit his parents don't really understand. He interviews mid-level Bush Administration bureaucrats.

Daniel is the lone regular on Ask the White House, a forum on the White House's Web site. Once or twice a week, the site features a different Cabinet member, deputy assistant, or undersecretary—Daniel refers to them as "the policy setters." Each one answers a dozen questions submitted by ordinary citizens. The entire conversation then spools out beside his or her federal head shot. A September 11, 2003, exchange between a German man and Andrew Card went like this: German man: "I just wanted to say: God bless America! Today on 09.11 and forever!" Card: "Yes!!!!!!!!! Thank you!"

In 2004, Daniel visited Ask the White House for the first time, soliciting from the deputy director of the Office of Management and Budget a rundown of recent cuts. That July, he asked Neil Armstrong if it was possible to send a man to Mars: "In your mind, could it work out, practically?" After his first successes, he made printouts and showed them to his parents, a psychiatrist and a garden writer. But these days, he said, when he sits down to dinner, "I'll usually just say, 'Oh, yeah. I asked the secretary of something-or-something something today.' "

After pressing Alberto Gonzales on the Patriot Act on April 12th, Daniel conversed with White House officials thirteen more times this summer. In addition to civil servants in Defense and the Small Business Administration, Daniel has chatted with the national-security adviser, Steve Hadley; the Homeland

Oxford, CAMBRIDGE, HARVARD, YALE, BEAVER CREEK SKI SCHOOL.


GROUSE MOUNTAIN, BEAVER CREEK, COLORADO

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Beaver Creek. Not exactly roughing it.

Security chief, Michael Chertoff; and the retired Reds shortstop Barry Larkin, the Presidential Tee Ball Commissioner. In an interview with Ambassador Rob Portman, the United States Trade Representative, Daniel asked how a proposed Central American Free Trade Agreement would protect workers' rights. "And will CAFTA-DR create more U.S. jobs in the end?"

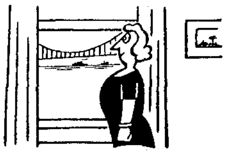
"Good trade agreements are win-win," Portman wrote in a long and deftly non-specific response. He encouraged Daniel to get involved in public service.

Daniel has honed his approach carefully. "You can't just ask a question that's overtly political, but you don't want to ask a softball question," he said. His signature lead-in is "I am a 15 year old very interested in politics and the like." He has also perfected a strategy that could be described as the Lippman Reverse: teasing a bias in his setup, then blow-darting the bureaucrat from the opposite direction. "Hi Mr. Secretary," he wrote to Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman. "My great-grandfather invented an oil drill bit back in the early 1900s and was a pioneer in the oil fields of Spindletop, TX and a co-founder of Texaco." (This is true.) "My question is what is the Energy Dept. doing to ward off climate change?"

With school starting, Daniel may have less time for Ask the White House, though he'd love to have a crack at President Bush, to revisit the question of weapons of mass destruction. "If I was going to get a truly truthful answer from the President, I'd ask him if that's what our intelligence said, or if he manipulated or cherry-picked it," he said. He'd also like to have this Katrina business clarified.

—*Jon Mooallem*

HERE TO THERE
AT SEA



In theory, the Tide and Current Taxi was supposed to work like this: You'd call Marie Lorenz, the volunteer dispatch officer, ship's pilot, and all-around free spirit, and tell her where you wanted to go—not right away, because tides and currents aren't immediately obliging, but at some point in the near future. Lorenz would study the weather forecast and the tide charts, and then suggest a meeting place and time that fit her schedule and, ideally, didn't much conflict with yours. If you were an Upper East Sider commuting to Wall Street, you might like to meet her at the crumbling dock at Ninety-first Street on the East River, to catch the outgoing tide at 5:15 A.M. You'd climb aboard her homemade fourteen-foot plywood skiff—Lorenz is a sculptor—and float slowly down to South Street Seaport, paddling when necessary to insure that you made it on time for your eight-thirty conference call.

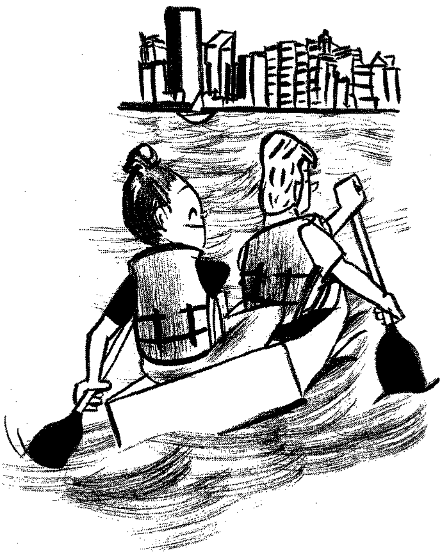
In practice, there were some complications. For instance, a great many large motorboats—barges, tugs, Circle Lines, pleasure cruisers—navigate the East River regularly, leaving perilous wakes for a small, flat-bottomed craft to negotiate, and generally making an east-to-west crossing resemble a game of Frogger. Also, there are surprisingly few places to dock, particularly on the Manhattan side. On Lorenz's maiden voyage, the boat was swamped by waves rebounding off the seawall at East Thirty-seventh Street, and eventually sank, leaving Lorenz and her fare to swim ashore at Roosevelt Island.

After rescuing the submerged boat, Lorenz made some repairs, adding several inches of coaming around the perimeter for extra wave protection, and replacing the Styrofoam coffee cup that she'd been using as a bailer with a proper milk jug. She also amended her terms of service: there would be no more Manhattan landings. Passengers would have to accept that they might end up nowhere near their specified destinations, if they launched or landed at all.

Midway through Lorenz's weeklong trial run, last month, a man with no particular place to go called to arrange a ride. Lorenz proposed a route—from the Huron Street pier in Greenpoint to Grand Ferry Park, in Williamsburg—that seemed manageable, if not very useful. High tide was at 9:17 A.M. on the agreed-upon morning, and Lorenz scheduled a ten-o'clock departure, by which point the current was moving southward at a fair clip. There was a steady breeze, and resting gulls spun slowly, as if on inner tubes drifting downriver. Lorenz presented her passenger with ziplock bags (for wallet and cell phone), a life jacket, and a short kayak paddle, to help with steering.

"I probably should have done some test runs," she said, as the boat eased out toward the channel and rocked uncomfortably from side to side. "The Tide and Current Taxi is a flawed vessel."

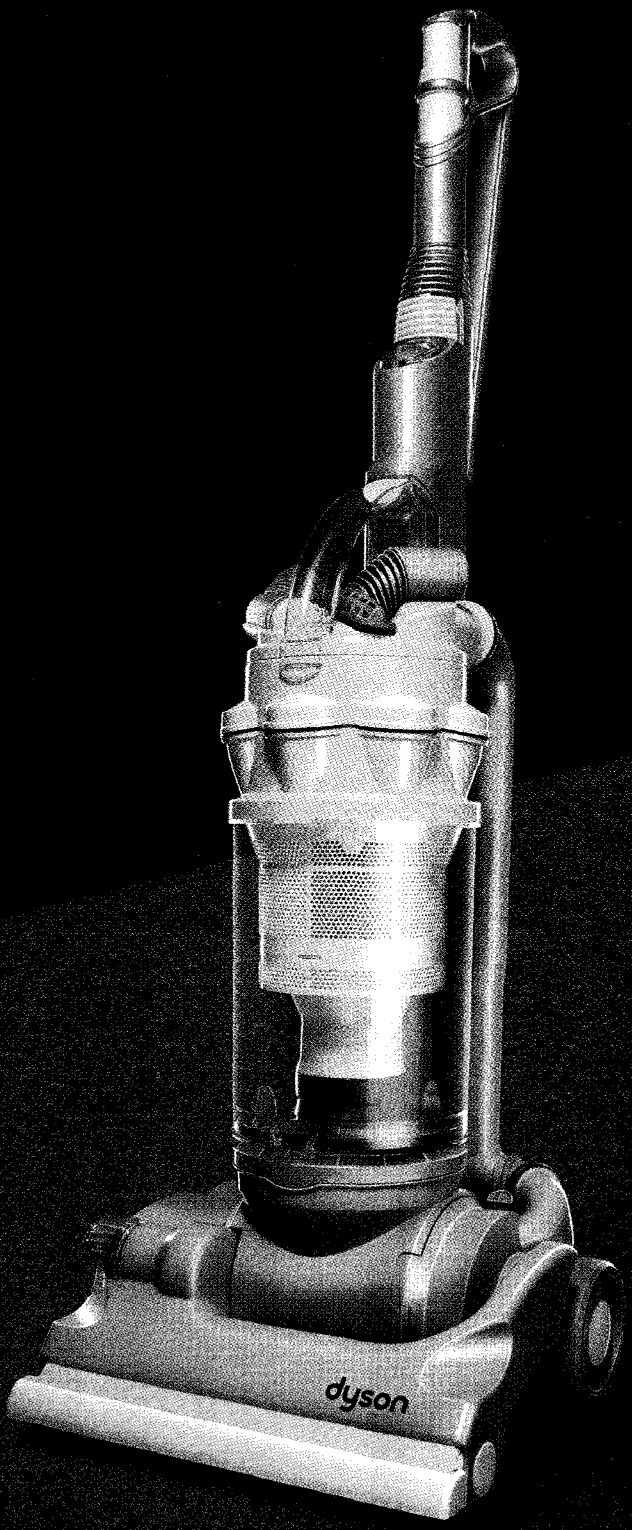
Soon, the wind died down, and a faint smell of oil-on-tuna settled in as the boat continued, past warehouses to port and the occasional slow-moving barge at starboard. Unlike a yellow cab, the tidal taxi offers its passenger, who sits in the bow, first glimpse of any oncoming attractions or obstacles. The only sign of animal life, breathing or not, came twenty minutes into the voyage, in the form of a pulsating, basketball-size purple jellyfish, just beyond reach. Shortly before eleven, a bobbing pillow appeared, like a giant ravioli, and behind it the old Domino Sugar factory: time to disembark. Lorenz steered the taxi toward a collection of rocks and rotted pilings in front of Grand Ferry Park. "If you could jump out and fend off the rocks while holding on to this rope, that would be a big help," she said.



Just then, the wake from a giant rig came crashing in, and the taxi struck a piling, spilling water over the prow and nearly sending the passenger face first into the water, where another jellyfish surfaced.

Safely ashore, Lorenz sat on a rock and looked across the river. "There goes my competition," she said, squinting, as a bright-yellow catamaran emblazoned with the words "Water Taxi" sped toward the financial district.

—*Ben McGrath*



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THE FINANCIAL PAGE

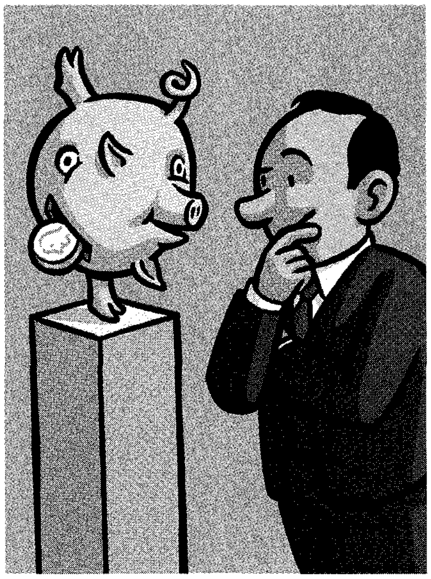
CASH FOR CANVAS

In 1904, André Level, a French financier, persuaded twelve other investors to contribute two hundred and twelve francs apiece to a new investment fund called La Peau de l'Ours ("the skin of the bear"), which was targeted at an unusual market: modern art. Over the next ten years, the fund bought more than a hundred paintings and drawings, including major works by Picasso and Matisse, before selling off its entire collection in a giant auction, at the Hôtel Drouot, in Paris, on March 2, 1914. The sale was more lucrative than even Level could have hoped: some paintings went for ten times the original price. When it was over, the partners found that they had quadrupled their initial investments.

It took ninety years, but their idea has hit the mainstream. A dozen art-only investment funds are now trying to raise money from investors looking to cash in on the art market's current boom. Last year, Picasso's "Boy with a Pipe," which had been sold in 1950 for thirty thousand dollars, went at auction for a hundred and four million, while a Canaletto that had fetched two hundred and eighty thousand pounds in 1973 sold for more than eleven million pounds three decades later. Next to such numbers, those shares of Wal-Mart that haven't budged in five years start to look pretty dull.

Art investment funds represent something of a revolution in the relationship between art and commerce. Art collecting has traditionally been the domain of wealthy individuals in search of rewards beyond the purely financial. (The economist John Picard Stein once quixotically tried to quantify these intangible rewards, deciding that they were equivalent to a return on investment of 1.6 per cent a year.) The new funds, by contrast, allow people with smaller bankrolls to play the art market by pooling their resources, and the only benefits are economic, since investors don't get to hang the paintings on their walls. In this scheme, art is just another "alternative asset class," like gold or wheat.

The new vogue for art investing has got a boost from a number of recent studies of the global art market's profitability. The Belgian economists Nathalie Buelens and Victor Ginsburgh looked at the prices of paintings between 1700 and 1961, and found that for long stretches of time certain schools of art were a better investment than bonds. More strikingly, Jiangping Mei and Michael Moses, economists at N.Y.U., examined the records of paintings with a previous auction history which Christie's and Sotheby's had sold since 1950 and used the data to put together the Mei Moses Fine Art Index. Over the past hundred and thirty years, the paintings in that index have outperformed bonds by a wide margin, and over the past fifty years they've performed about as well as stocks, too.



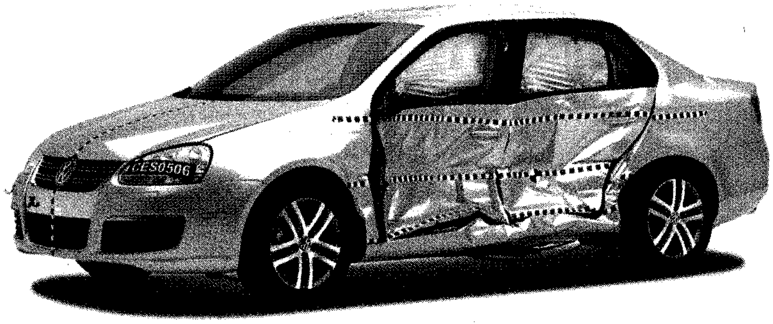
CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

So should we all dump our shares of ExxonMobil in order to own a few square inches of a Manet canvas? Not quite. The work of Mei and Moses tells us a good deal about how much people were willing to pay for a select group of paintings. But that doesn't tell us very much about whether "art" as a category is a good investment. In the first place, Mei and Moses do not fully take into account costs that cut into profits, such as the transaction fees that you pay when you buy and sell a painting (often as much as twenty per cent). Looking at resale prices also unavoidably skews the sample upward, because paintings that get auctioned are usually ones that owners believe will fetch a hefty sum. But, above all, the vast majority of paintings that people have bought in the past never make it to resale. According to one estimate, a mere 0.5 per cent of new paintings are worth anything at auction thirty years later. Relying on auction prices to calculate a return on investment for art ignores all the money people spent on the other 99.5 per cent. It's true that if you had been able to buy ahead of time every painting that was resold at Christie's and Sotheby's over the past fifty years you would have done well. But that doesn't tell you much about how to make money now.

Of course, the new art-fund managers promise that their superior forecasting skills will allow them to identify which artists and which art works are going to be hotter tomorrow than they are today. Then again, this is the same promise that mutual-fund managers make to investors about stocks, and, in recent years, almost ninety per cent of those managers have failed to outperform the market. The business of forecasting art prices is, as the economist William Baumol once put it, a "floating crap game." So the headlong rush to invest in art looks more like a fad than like a rational approach to making money. In some ways, it resembles the boom in Internet stock funds that swamped Wall Street in 1999, when investors were convinced that the only direction was up. Maybe the explosion of interest in art investing is a sign that we are near the top of the market. And buying at the top is, of course, no way to reap a profit. According to the analysts at Art Market Research, the value of European Impressionist paintings has been cut in half since the market for them peaked, in 1990.

Meanwhile, the influx of investors will only make it harder to profit from buying art. La Peau de l'Ours faced almost no competition when it started buying paintings—which partly explains its success—but by 1914 prices had risen so much that it made sense for the fund's members to cash out. In the end, the more people come to think that art is a good investment, the quicker it will become a bad one.

—*James Surowiecki*



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ANNALS OF CRIME

A THEFT IN THE LIBRARY

The case of the missing maps.

BY WILLIAM FINNEGAN

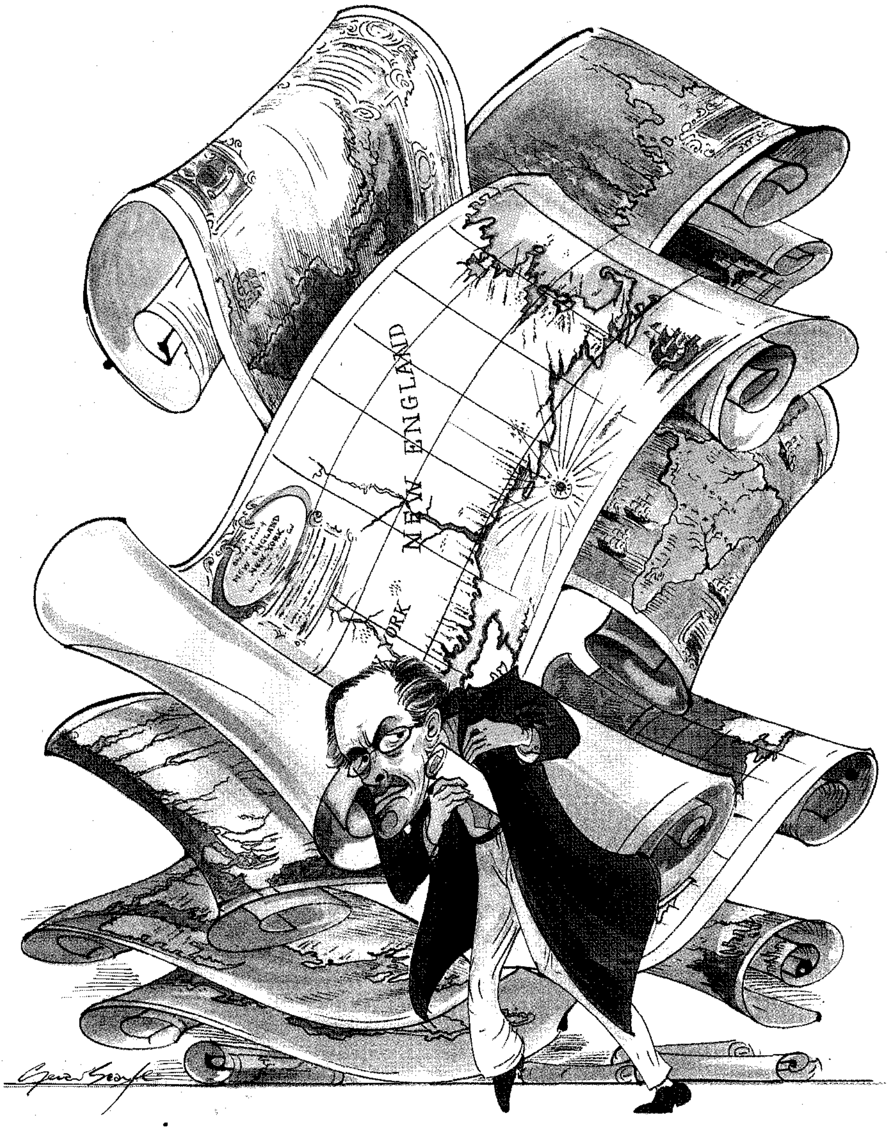
A man walked into a library. It was a Wednesday morning in June. The man was E. Forbes Smiley III, a rare-map dealer, forty-nine years old, tall and stocky. The library was the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, at Yale University. Smiley entered at the mezzanine level, where a Gutenberg Bible lay open in a glass case. He descended a staircase, registered at a desk, and submitted requests for books. The books included a world atlas, compiled by Gerard de Jode and published in Antwerp in 1578, called "Speculum Orbis Terrarum" ("Mirror of the World"); Richard Hakluyt's "Principall Navigations, Voiages, and Discoveries of the English Nation," published in London in 1589; Captain John Smith's "Advertisements for the Unexperienced Planters of New-England, or Anywhere," published in London in 1631; and Captain Luke Foxe's "North-West Fox," published in London in 1635.

Smiley settled down with the books in the reading room, a spacious, glass-walled enclosure where scholars work at long tables, and oil portraits of eminent Yale librarians hang on the walls. The reading room looks out on a sunken sculpture court. The court contains a set of big geometric pieces by Isamu Noguchi, including a cube standing on one point which, according to Noguchi, signifies chance.

The Beinecke, completed in 1963, is a box within a box. The outer box is five stories of thin white marble plates set in frames of gray Vermont granite. When sunlight strikes the building, it penetrates the marble in veined golden sheets—a modernist version of ecclesiastical light. The inner box is a huge glass tube, filled with the library's closed stacks of half a million rare books and several million manuscripts, kept at a temperature and a humidity calculated to prevent decay. The visual warmth of all that vellum and leather counterposes the abstract rigor of the Beinecke's architecture.

Smiley is a denizen of great research libraries and museums. Like many rare-map dealers, but perhaps more so, he is a scholar—deeply versed in history, cartography, languages, art—as much as he is a businessman. He specializes in the Age of Discovery and Colonial New England. He is known within the trade for having exceptionally fine judgment about maps and their value, and for making subtle and arcane discoveries; he once demonstrated, for example, that Johann Ruysch's landmark "Universalior Cogniti Orbis Tabula" ("Universal Chart of the Known World"), which was published in Rome in 1507, was based not on Portuguese sources, as others believed, but on Spanish ones, including, in particular, Columbus's account of his fourth voyage.

The books he took into the Beinecke reading room all contained important maps. The "Advertisements" holds an elegant folded map, adorned with a portrait of Captain Smith himself, that was the first to name New England. De Jode's atlas is extremely rare; only a dozen copies are known to exist. It contains ninety ornate maps, and Yale's copy includes original hand color. Captain Luke Foxe was the first European to circumnavigate Hudson Bay, and the map in his book, titled "Part of America, Part of China," which used a circumpolar projection, reflects the confusion, among seekers of a Northwest Passage to Asia, about just what they were finding. Hakluyt's books about English voyages of discovery, which were extremely popular, provided material for Shakespeare's plays, notably "The Tempest"; this one had in it a stunning world map, known as "Typus Orbis Terrarum" ("Image of the World"), drawn by the great Flemish cartographer Abraham Ortelius. It had big, undulant clouds in the corner, and a framed quotation from Cicero in the bottom cartouche.



E. Forbes Smiley III was a connoisseur; he knew where the best old maps were.

GERALD SCARFE

Around 11 A.M., a Beinecke staff member named Naomi Saito found a blade for an X-Acto knife lying on the floor of the reading room. Saito took the blade to her supervisor, Ellen Cordes, who wrapped it in white tissue. Cordes quickly toured the reading room, making note of a man in a pale tweed blazer who seemed to be looking at old maps. She checked the morning's register, and found that he was Edward Forbes Smiley. She Googled him. He had a Web site, E. Forbes Smiley III—Early Maps Atlases & Globes. On it he said, "Over the past twenty five years, I have operated offices at 16 East 79th Street, New York, galleries at 175 East 57th Street, New York, and a private business on Martha's Vineyard." Smiley claimed to "have built several of the largest collections of American cartographic materials in this country, including the Norman Leventhal Collection of New England maps, and the Lawrence H. Slaughter Collection of English maps and atlases—now at the New York Public Library." Some extraordinary pieces were listed for sale: a 1673 Willem Blaeu wall map of America priced at a hundred and thirty-five thousand dollars; a 1743 plan of Boston for a hundred and eighty-five thousand dollars.

Cordes called Yale's main library, Sterling Memorial. A colleague in the map collection there knew Smiley, and said that in fact some items he had been looking at recently were missing. For lack of evidence, the matter had not been pursued. Cordes contacted Ralph Mannarino, the Beinecke's security supervisor, who started videotaping Smiley and called the campus police. Although the librarians realized it only later, the videotape recorded Smiley removing a map from Gerard de Jode's 1578 atlas. Around two o'clock, Detective Martin Buonfiglio showed up. According to his affidavit, filed in Connecticut Superior Court, "At approximately 3:00 PM Smiley left the library and I followed."

Buonfiglio tracked Smiley as he made his way through New Haven. Smiley went into the shop of the Yale Center for British Art, quickly exited, then doubled back and entered the museum. Buonfiglio followed him in. According to his affidavit, "I then spoke to Smiley and introduced myself. I identified myself as a Police Detective working for Yale University and asked him if he was just at Beinecke Library, when he replied yes." Buonfiglio continued:

> I then showed Smiley the exacto knife blade that was wrapped in the white tissue and asked if the blade was his. Smiley became very nervous and replied "yes it is I must of dropped it I have a cold." . . . I then asked Smiley if I might look in his briefcase. Smiley said "of course."

Buonfiglio found "what appeared to be rare maps and documents"; there were seven of them. He asked Smiley to return to the Beinecke with him. By the time they got there, Cordes had determined that the copy of Smith's "Advertisements" was missing its map. Buonfiglio wrote, "Smiley told me that the maps he surrendered were his and that he took them to the Library to compare the quality of his maps to the quality of the Library's maps."

As Smiley was being questioned, another officer, Lieutenant William Holohan, noticed a bulge in Smiley's blazer pocket, and asked him what it was. "Smiley then took out a map and gave it to Lt. Holohan, and said 'Oh I forgot about that,' " Buonfiglio wrote. It was the map from Smith's book." The affidavit continued:

> I asked Smiley where he got the map and first he told me he bought it from a dealer in London Mr. Philip Burden. When I asked for a way to confirm the sale, Smiley told me he

> wasn't sure if it was Burden it may have been someone else.
>
> Smiley was then arrested for Larceny in the First Degree.

Smiley left the library in handcuffs.

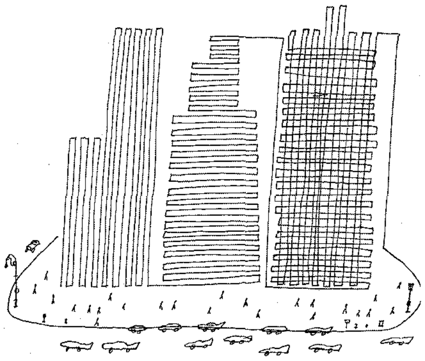
"In Thy Map Securely Saile"—that was the name that the New York Public Library gave to a lavish exhibition, mounted in 1998, celebrating the acquisition of the Lawrence H. Slaughter collection of maps, charts, and atlases relating to Colonial North America. (The exhibition's title came from a seventeenth-century poem by Robert Herrick.) Slaughter, who died in 1996, had a magnificent collection, and Forbes Smiley did play a central role in building it. He was cited in the exhibition's press release, and Alice C. Hudson, the chief of the library's Map Division and the curator of the exhibition, warmly acknowledged "the contribution of E. Forbes Smiley III, whose advice and counsel were instrumental in the acquisition . . . and whose research is found between the lines of much of the exhibition text."

Smiley had been involved with the N.Y.P.L. for more than twenty years. He was one of the original members of the library's Mercator Society, which supports the Map Division, and, with Hudson, sat on its steering committee. The relationship between research libraries and rare-book and map dealers is necessarily close. Dealers sell things libraries want, and work for clients whose collections may be ultimately donated to a favored library. A dealer may bid on behalf of a library at auction, and libraries rely on dealers to find decent prices for items they want to deaccession.

The number of rare-map dealers who work at that level is fairly small. For a couple of weeks this summer, virtually everyone in the trade disappeared: they were all in Budapest for a conference. Later, when I asked an American dealer about one of the events in Budapest, he said, "All we talked about was Smiley." There are dealers who think this scandal could spread so far, and destroy so much of the good will they enjoy with collectors and institutions, that the trade will be ruined. They are assuming the worst—that Smiley has been stealing maps for decades, flooding the market with dirty goods. Indeed, libraries, museums, galleries, and major collectors around the country have been suddenly forced to wonder if their collections have been plundered or corrupted. As Peter Barber, the map librarian of the British Library, told Kim Martineau, of the Hartford *Courant*, who has reported extensively on the case, "Forbes Smiley is disturbing because he is a member of the inner circle."

Smiley's route into that circle was indirect. He did not apprentice with one of the established dealers but, rather, in 1979, when he was twenty-three, went to work in the map department at B. Altman, the old Fifth Avenue department store. The people who bought antique maps at B. Altman were not sophisticated collectors. They might be buying a wedding gift—a tastefully framed map of the Missouri Territory for a couple settling in St. Louis. But the head of the map department, Rosejeanne Slifer, was a serious collector and an independent scholar. And Smiley, too, began to immerse himself in old maps, spending long hours poring over the inventories of midtown dealers and the copperplate engravings in the Public Library's map and rare-book rooms.

Smiley was not reticent about sharing his enthusiasms and insights. On one occasion in the early eighties, Hudson brought a group of map lovers to B. Altman, and Smiley dazzled them with his knowledge and fluency. And through his work at B. Altman he came to know Norman Leventhal, a wealthy real-estate developer in Boston with a newfound interest in antique maps, who was looking for maps of New England and, in particular, the Boston area. (Smiley also met his wife, Lisa, whom he married in 1985, at B. Altman, where she was working. She later became an interior designer.)



Smiley left B. Altman in the mid-eighties to begin working as a dealer on his own. In his early days, he seemed to be engaged primarily in finding maps to sell to Leventhal, who became his first important client. But his reputation grew, and he was soon buying and selling valuable maps for a range of collectors. He opened offices on East Seventy-ninth Street. A catalogue that he issued in 1988 was described by Barry Lawrence Ruderman, a leading California dealer and collector, on his Web site, as "one of the great rare Americana Catalogues of the past 25 years. . . . It stands head and shoulders above the rest for its combination of rare material and scholarship."

As he became established, Smiley used the library extensively in his business. "We were a convenient base for him to show treasures," Alice Hudson told me recently at the N.Y.P.L. He might bring clients in to show them maps similar to ones they were thinking of acquiring, or for what Hudson called "training sessions" in the finer points of cartography. Hudson said that she was always happy to help, because "we want to encourage collectors." She also had the highest opinion of Smiley's expertise. "I mean, if that subway map were eighteenth-century New York City"—she pointed to a large map of the subway system that happened to be in the office where we were talking—"he could just go on and on about it. 'This place name is because of Charles II'; 'This boundary line is really incorrect.' I mean, just amazing." Smiley, she said, could look at an early map of the Middle Atlantic shoreline and tell her which three earlier maps each section was copied from. "He would just be able to stand there and reel this stuff off, and it would be correct."

Smiley conducted his business in a distinctly private way. He did not build up his gallery to invite walk-in business, and, unlike most dealers of his stature, he never joined the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America. He tended to concentrate on a few wealthy clients—serious collectors, like Norman Leventhal and Lawrence Slaughter—helping them to focus their interests, educate their tastes, and shape their legacies. Such work requires discretion and the instincts of a courtier, and Smiley had both. Secretiveness is built into the

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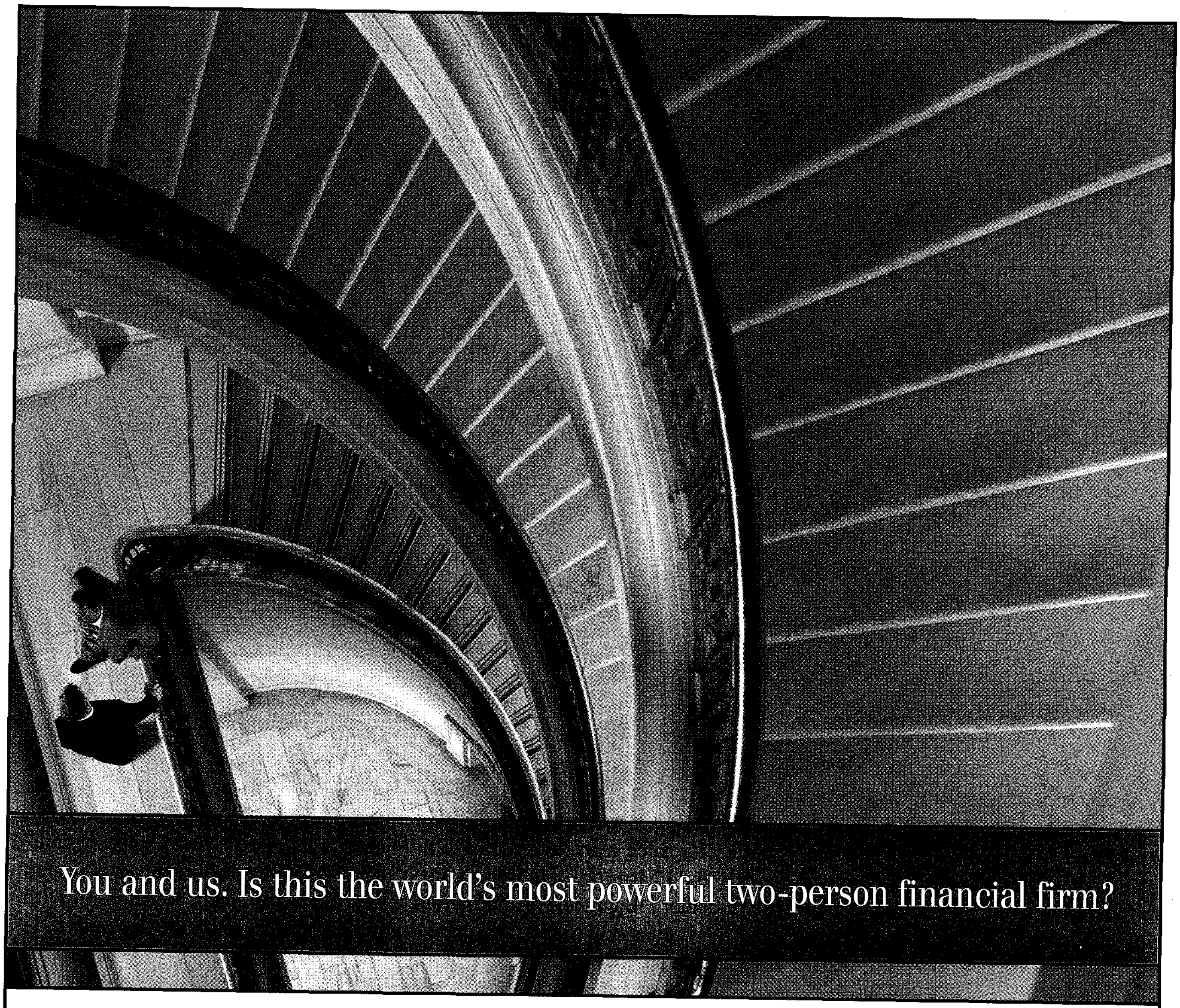
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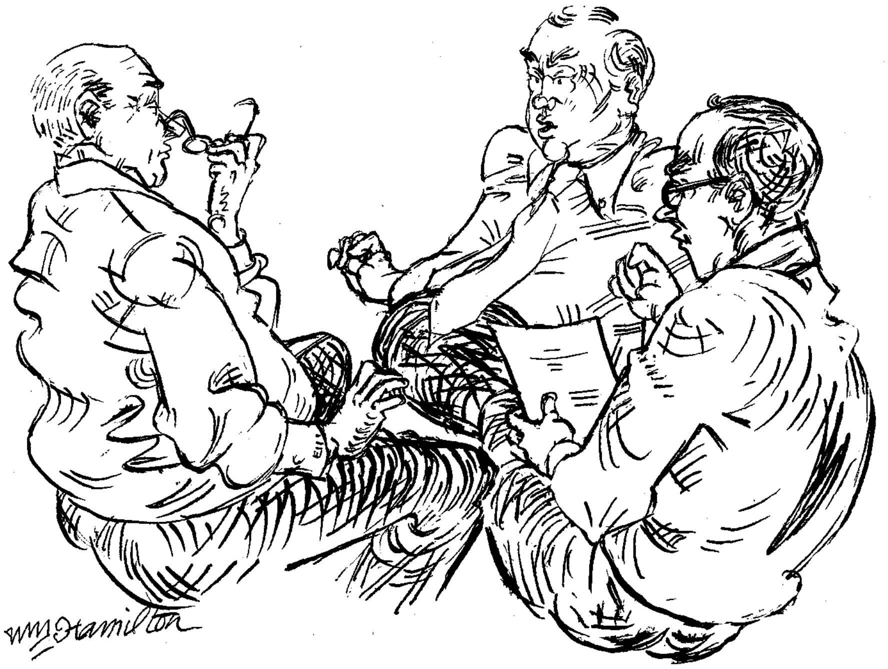


"Remember when 'The sky's the limit' was something we wanted to hear?"

antiquarian trade generally. "Knowledge is money in our business, and you don't necessarily want to share it," one rare-book dealer told me. "Knowing where to get things at a good price is really how we stay in business. We also protect our clients, many of whom buy and hold very valuable things, which are not necessarily insured."

It didn't hurt Smiley that prices in his area—maps of Colonial North America—were soaring. Old maps of many other places, for whatever reason, hold less interest, and thus less value. ("Every map dealer has a drawer full of maps of France," Kenneth Nebenzahl, a Chicago dealer, told me. "The French just have no interest. Don't ask me why. And if you've got a rare map of Lower Slobovia, no matter how beautiful it is, you'll never sell it.")

Leventhal, for his part, was determined to put together the most complete possible collection of early maps of Boston. It's in the nature of such a project that, in its latter stages, the missing items become harder to find, and more and more expensive. Most of the great rarities were immured in institutions, leaving dealers and collectors to contend for what in the trade is called "the float." Still, Smiley kept coming up with remarkable finds.

Ashley Baynton-Williams, who comes from a well-established family of British map dealers, and who worked for Smiley for three years, found him to be gifted and charming. "He was a complete dealer," Baynton-Williams told me. "It's quite a skill to buy, and quite a skill to sell, and Forbes had both."

Many dealers mocked Smiley's personal style. "He worked so hard at the haute-preppy thing," one said. "Right down to the deck shoes with no socks." Another told me, "I have no idea if he dropped out of kindergarten, but if you're looking for a guy who the average American is going to think is a preppy who went to Andover and then to Yale and is just about to go play golf, that's Forbes." A rare-book dealer in New Hampshire said, "He certainly didn't have any shortage of self-esteem. He'd call and make it known that he was calling you 'from the Vineyard.' He had a place on Martha's Vineyard, a place in Manhattan." This dealer saw a certain logic to Smiley's airs and graces. "At the high end, you're dealing with some really wealthy people," he said. "And they want to associate, frankly, with old money. They're not comfortable spending thirty thousand dollars dealing with some anonymous person. They want *you* to be someone."

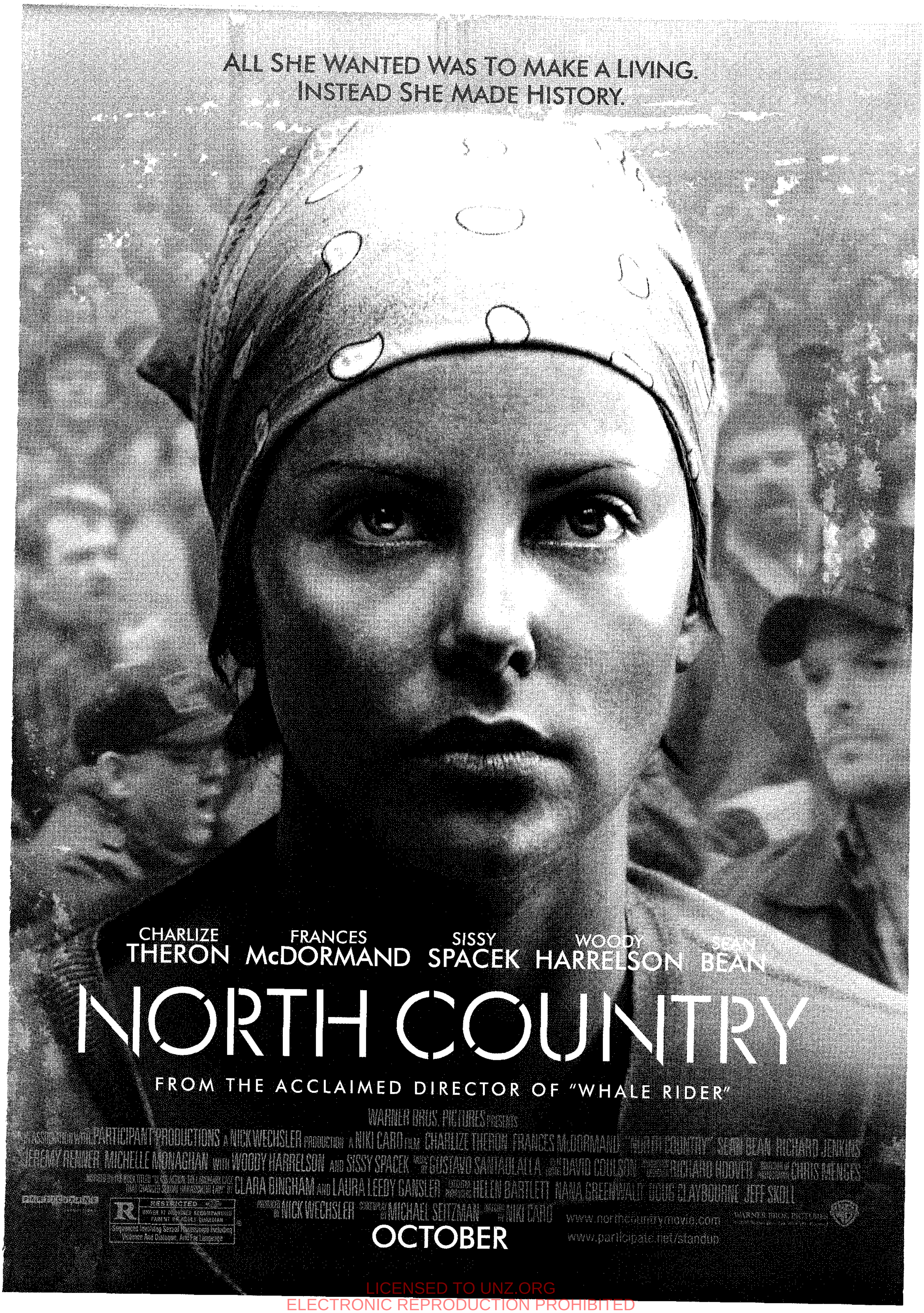
I asked the dealer if he thought that Smiley came from old money.

There was a pause. With an air of decreasing conviction, he said, "I think he comes from a prominent New England family." Another pause. "His name certainly suggests that, doesn't it?"

During the Age of Discovery, maps were often highly classified. They were considered by European governments, rightly, to be the basis of their trading empires, proprietary in the extreme. Copying or sharing them with foreign powers was sometimes a capital offense. Even as that changed, the political, economic, and even theological agendas of maps and mapmakers remained paramount. Forbes Smiley excelled at interpreting those agendas—how an old map might advance the case of a large landowner in Colonial New Jersey locked in a rent dispute, or buttress British alliances with certain Native American tribes against the French.

Maps were not much prized by collectors until recently. Most old maps were in books and atlases, and generally were not sold separately, except when an already "imperfect" (incomplete or damaged) atlas was broken up by a dealer. But old maps began to catch on with high-end decorators in the nineteen-seventies and eighties. "The excitement over English country style gave maps a push," Smiley told the *Times*, in a 1990 story about the map trade. The growth in the market led to a plague of "atlas-breaking," as the maps the books contained became more valuable than the books themselves, and the pages were cut out and sold. (More recently, the atlases themselves have become scarce, reversing the value equation.) But demand continued to outrun supply. As Smiley explained to the *Times*, "The problem for dealers is not so much selling as finding the really nice things." One consequence of the boom in prices was that the antiquarian trade, while never easy to enter, became even harder to get a start in, particularly toward the upper end.

Most libraries, meanwhile, didn't really know what they had in the way of old maps. Alice Hudson told me that, at the N.Y.P.L., "maps could be in the general stacks, they could be in rare books, they could be in the print division, they could be in the Spencer Col-



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NORTH COUNTRY

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lection of fine bindings. And the Spencer Collection curator could care less about the contents. Or a map could be in the Arents Collection of tobacco history, because it has a cartouche with tobacco leaves on it. For the collector, it's a puzzle, and he's got to figure it out."

For an expert, the puzzle is less perplexing, and for a thief the incuriosity of non-map librarians is a great convenience. As Tony Campbell, the former map librarian at the British Library, wrote in a recent online essay, "Issues Arising Out of the Forbes Smiley Affair," "Steal one page from a first folio Shakespeare and you have nothing of value; slip into your jacket pocket a single sheet from a book containing an early map of North America and you may have a readily saleable, broadly untraceable artefact worth up to six figures in dollars."

The rare-map world has been inundated with stolen maps many times. At Yale alone, some of the heists have been spectacular. In 1973, two Byzantine priests were discovered to have been stealing rare atlases from the Sterling Library, smuggling them out under their cassocks. The two men, who lived in a monastery in Queens, were caught after a Chicago rare-book dealer tried to sell Yale one of the purloined volumes, a seventeenth-century atlas. When the F.B.I. searched the monastery, hundreds of valuable books were found. They had been stolen from libraries at Harvard, Dartmouth, Notre Dame, the University of Chicago, and many other colleges, in addition to Yale.

In 1978, Andrew Antippas, an English professor at Tulane, pleaded guilty to stealing five rare maps from the Sterling. In the wake of the Antippas case, some of the most valuable atlases in the Sterling were moved to the Beinecke, where security was much stronger. But the Beinecke, obviously, is far from impregnable.

Perhaps the most widely publicized case of rare-map theft in recent times was that of Gilbert Bland, a small-time Florida dealer who, though not especially map-literate, went on a cross-country crime spree, cutting hundreds of maps from books in scores of libraries, where he registered under aliases. He was finally caught in Baltimore, in 1995. But according to Frank Manasek, a Vermont dealer, "the Gilbert Bland case was small potatoes," compared with what Smiley might have done. "Bland was the kind of guy who would stick up a 7-Eleven. This is much bigger."

It is bigger because Smiley is a connoisseur; he knew where the best stuff was and he could find buyers for it. If someone else—say, a Gilbert Bland—had come up with the rarities he did, it would have stood out. But if Smiley was asked where a valuable map came from he could answer, "An old customer—his children are selling his collection." That was considered sufficient explanation. A dealer protected his sources.

After Smiley's arrest, the Beinecke asked William Reese, a New Haven rare-book dealer, to evaluate the eight maps taken from Smiley when he was arrested, four of which had been claimed by the Beinecke. Reese, who is one of the country's leading authorities on early Americana, told me that the Beinecke maps were relatively straightforward to assess. The Smith was worth about fifty thousand dollars. Smiley also had the Foxe map, which was roughly the same, and the Ortelius map, from the Hakluyt, which Reese appraised at seventy-eight thousand. The most valuable was the one from the de Jode. It was a double-page world map, and Reese considered it to be worth a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. But the de Jode map was damaged; it had been held in place by a strip down the center, perhaps reinforced by a piece of linen, and some of the original green coloring on the map had seeped nearly through the paper, as sixteenth-century green often does. Weakened paper, strong attachment—the result was a jagged tear down the middle of the map. There was also some worming, which served to confirm the source, since wormholes in Yale's atlas lined up perfectly with those in the map.

Of the four maps not claimed by Yale, one was a 1691 "Carte Generalle de la Nouvelle France"—Reese valued it at seventy-five thousand, if it proved to be genuine. (It did not. As Reese explained, "They did lots of great reproductions in the nineteenth century, not usually with intent to deceive, and they often used older paper.") Another was a strikingly accurate 1671 French Jesuit depiction of Lake Superior, worth perhaps twenty-five thousand. There was also a famous map of New England, drawn by John Foster in 1677, which Reese found to be a facsimile.

Finally, there was a 1582 Robert Thorne world map, "Septentrio Orbis Universalis Descriptio" ("Universal Representation of the Northern World"), which had appeared in another of Richard Hakluyt's books, "Divers Voyages." It would be worth five hundred thousand dollars if it was genuine. But there are only seven known copies of the Thorne, and they're all in libraries or museums. "We called the institutions, and they all checked and all found that they still had their maps," Reese told me. In his opinion, "Smiley's map was just a very good facsimile—an extremely good facsimile, done on old paper."

Under the circumstances, it was disturbing that Smiley was carrying around an unusually good facsimile of an exceptionally valuable map. How many curators might be saying that items were accounted for when those items had been replaced by very clever reproductions? Yale, at least, had no copy of the Thorne.

But why, for that matter, did Smiley have an X-Acto blade with him? There were better, less destructive methods for removing old maps from books. The wet-string trick, for instance. Take a length of ordinary cotton string, wad it into your cheek, go to the library, and, when the desired map is found, unobtrusively place the string along the tab of the book or atlas. Close the book. Old paper will soften dramatically, making it easy to pull free from an ancient binding. "But it takes about ten minutes," Reese said. "Maybe it was just too nerve-racking to wait."

A great problem with old maps, Reese said, is establishing provenance. With an old book, you can often tell, from bookplates and all sorts of runic markings, to whom it belonged through the years. Maps are essentially unmoored, especially since library catalogues fail even to mention, let alone describe, the maps contained in their books.

Reese knows, if anyone does, what maps are supposed to be where. And in 1989 he had gone to look at one of the Beinecke's two copies of William Hubbard's "A Narrative of the Troubles with

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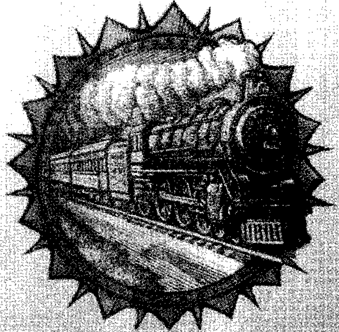

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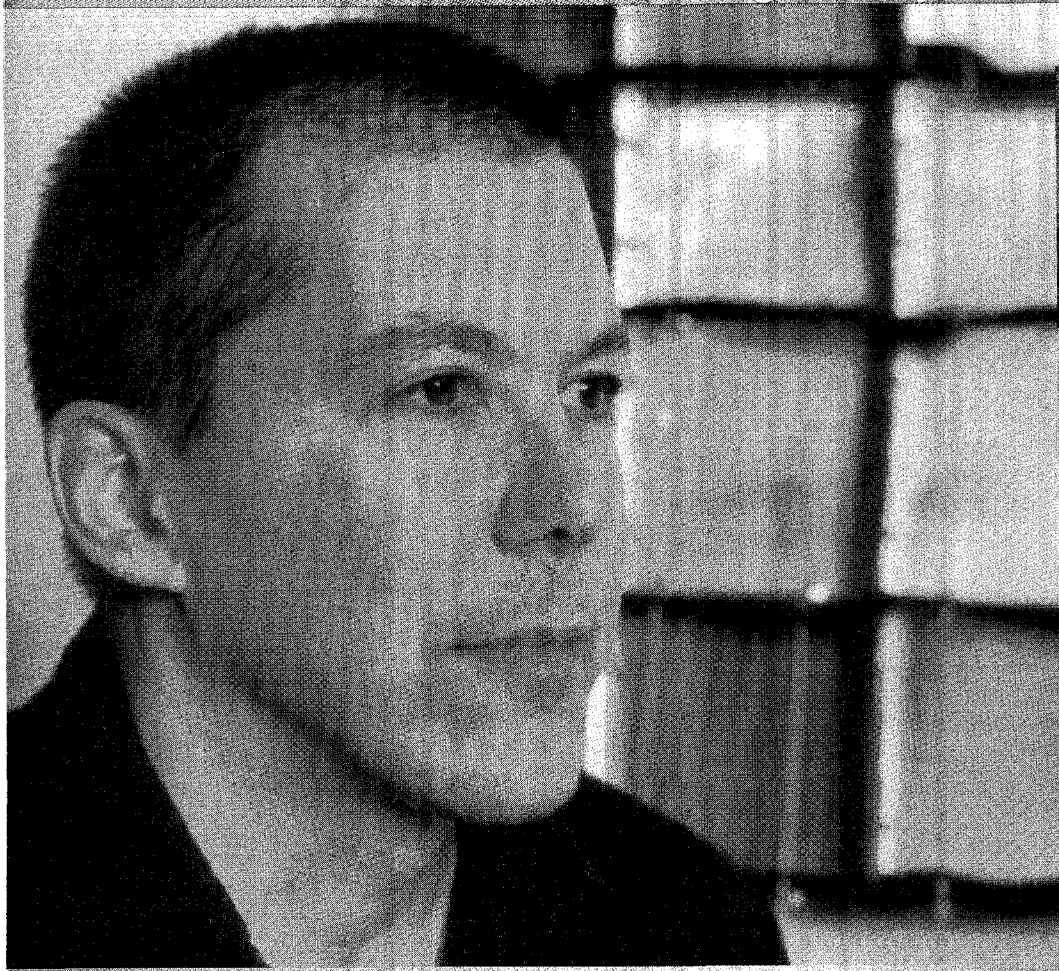

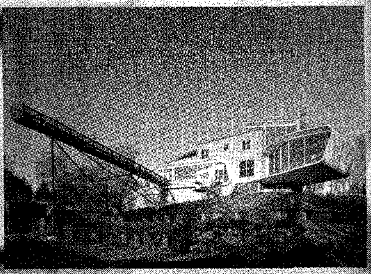

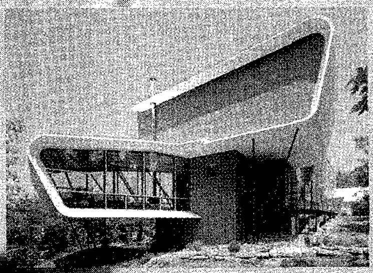

Advertisement

THE ORIGINATORS

ARCHITECT *Douglas Garofalo*

INNOVATION FROM THE INSIDE OUT. Some architectural innovations are hard to miss. When a new skyscraper wrapped in waves of titanium or twisted in unlikely directions goes up, it gets noticed. But peek behind the curtain wall and the profession's avant-garde can be found in more unexpected spaces. The suburbs, for example.

For Chicago-based architect Douglas Garofalo, innovation is more than a quest for wild forms or shocking new materials. It's about process and place. It's about knowing how and when to wield the latest technology to create new solutions. It's about understanding that buildings are like living things. "I see every building as an ecosystem. Each takes form from various competing elements, dynamic forces, the emerging aspects of life," the architect muses. This vision is one reason Garofalo is considered one of today's most innovative and influential architects.

For this originator, the suburbs were a frontier. This was the territory where he first made his mark, not to mention where he changed the profession for good. His early houses—created for clients willing to take some risks—are daring explorations in form, color, and function. Yet as these curving, bending, enveloping structures took their place next to upright Colonials and stout bungalows, what caught the eye of observers was not how much they stood out but how much they belonged. Problem by problem, innovation by innovation, Garofalo had reimagined the house. And sinuous lines had arrived in the suburbs.

Today, Garofalo and his team of designers and architects continues to expand the boundaries of what can be built—and where. The firm now takes on projects of every scale, from small sculptural objects to a massive arts center with an ever-changing digital façade on the south side of Chicago. "We're designing in ways that were impossible just ten years ago. It all starts with knowing what's possible."

Photo of Garofalo: Suzy Poling; All other photos: Nathan Kirkman

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the Indians" and had seen that its map, the John Foster map printed in Boston in 1677—the same map that was found, sixteen years later, in facsimile, in Smiley's briefcase—was missing. The Boston Foster was the first map printed in North America. The impression left by the folded map on the adjacent pages of the Hubbard book was still clear and deep, but the map could have been gone for years. Without the map, the Hubbard book is worth about thirty-five thousand dollars today. With the map, it is worth at least a quarter of a million. Reese is a trustee of the Yale Library Associates, which supports the university's libraries, and so he was concerned with the scholarly value of the holdings, not just their market value. After his discovery, he helped the Beinecke identify dozens of similarly vulnerable books—those with small, easily pocketed folded maps.

Reese now says that, at the time, he thought about Forbes Smiley. He recalled a conversation with Smiley in which Smiley mentioned that he had "handled"—bought and sold—the Boston Foster. In their world, that was no small boast. To this day, Reese has never handled a Boston Foster. There are almost no privately held copies. It was hard to believe that Smiley had misspoken. There was a Foster map in Smiley's 1988 catalogue, but it was a slightly different version, printed in London a few months after the Boston Foster, and far less valuable. (One way to tell them apart: the White Hills, on the Boston map, became, for some reason, the Wine Hills on the London version.) Smiley had already sold his London Foster to Leventhal. If he had handled both maps, why wasn't the more important Boston Foster in the catalogue?

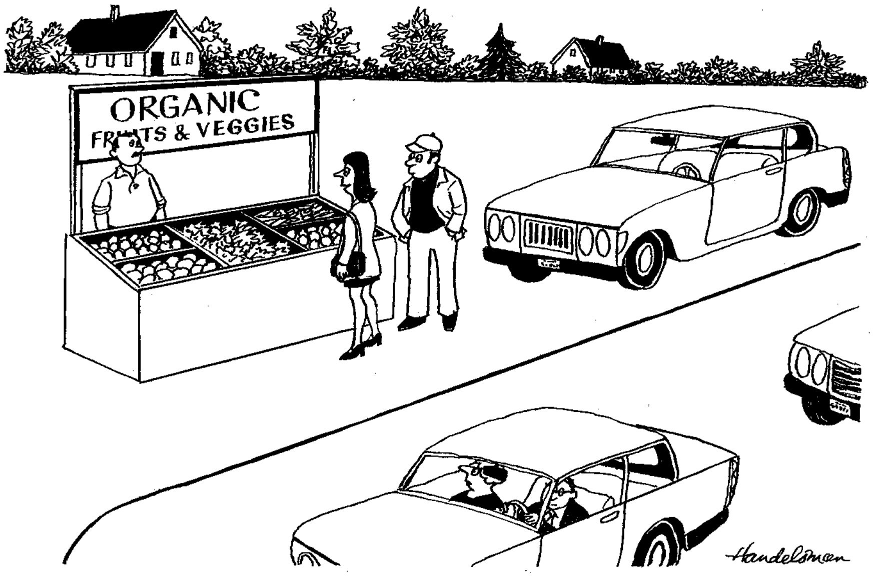
The description of the map in Smiley's catalogue is also strangely scanty, given the rich analyses he was capable of. It fails to comment on the style of the map, which was made from a woodcut, and is far rougher, and less sophisticated, than the maps of the same era that surround it in the catalogue, with their scrolled cartouches and coats of arms, their mermaids and gambolling putti. It is a homely, Puritan, frontier map—a "wilderness production," as Reese put it. And yet Smiley's catalogue text focusses narrowly on its cartographic qualities—the fact that it got the relationship between the Connecticut and Merrimack Rivers right—and on its role in a boundary dispute between colonists.

The most disappointing aspect of his gloss is the historical interpretation. "The immediate occasion for publication of the map was the terrible Indian massacres, which took place throughout New England in 1675," Smiley writes, and that's true enough. These massacres were actually part of a ferocious conflict, usually known as King Philip's War, between the English and the Wampanoag and other Indian tribes. William Hubbard, a prominent Puritan minister, was engaged in a public debate with another local divine, Increase Mather, over the meaning of the war. Mather had already published his views. Both men believed that it was an expression of God's wrath toward the colonists, but Mather was certain that the cause was their insufficient piety, while Hubbard was intent on evaluating the war's brutal events before reaching any conclusion. His book attempted to make that evaluation; he used the map to tell a story about the war and come up with a moral.

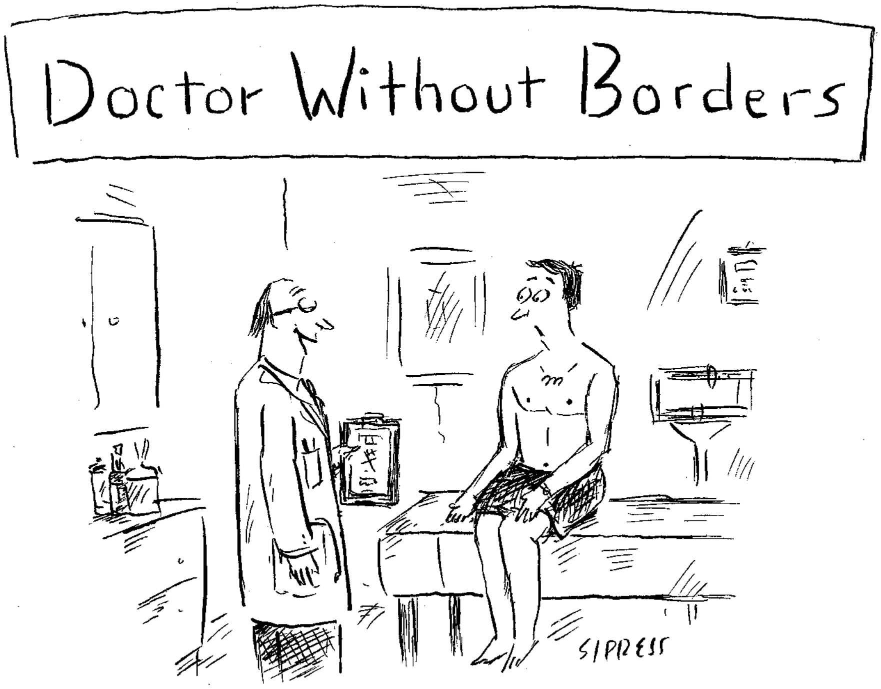
Towns and villages that had suffered battles with the Indians were marked by numbers—this was explained in the legend—that corresponded to passages in the book. The Connecticut River towns of Northfield and Deerfield, although shown on the map, had been burned and abandoned. By the time the map was drawn, the English had essentially won the war. The Wampanoag leader, King Philip, had been captured and beheaded, and his wife and son sold into slavery in the West Indies. But the colonists were still in collective shock, and the mood of the map is bleak, dark, beleaguered. The sense of vast forests full of hostile tribes surrounding a few undamaged coastal settlements is palpable. Indians are shown emerging from the woods in the far north, where fighting was still going on. As Matthew Edney, a scholar at the Osher Map Library, in Maine, wrote recently, "Hubbard's pessimistic map thus celebrated neither English colonialism nor an English victory in war, but a merciless God."

Why did Smiley miss, or elide, all this? If he stole the Boston map, it might have been his first big theft. Perhaps he just did not want an astute précis that would call attention to the map, or to what it had to say about sin and punishment.

Bill Reese remembers his first transaction with Smiley. It was 1983, and Reese had just bought, at auction in Pennsylvania, a 1790 Matthew Clark coastal atlas of the Eastern Seaboard of the United States—the earliest coastal atlas printed in America. Smiley called and offered him fifty thousand dollars for it—twice what Reese had paid. Reese was happy to let the book go for that. Smiley arrived in New Haven by train. "He gave me a check, took the atlas, and left on the train," Reese recalls. "It turned out that he had already sold three of the



"Organic is nice, but haven't you got anything digital?"



"You're the picture of health—and, by the way, I'm totally in love with you."

maps, at God knows what price, and I guess he just disembowelled the book right there on the train. I didn't like that very much, when I heard about it, because that atlas is a really rare thing. There are only eight or nine intact copies."

Reese also didn't like it much when Smiley's check bounced. "It's still the biggest bad check anybody's ever written me," he said. "I got my money eventually, after a lot of caterwauling on my part."

Smiley soon acquired, according to Kenneth Nebenzahl, the Chicago dealer, "a less than sterling reputation—as a slow payer, or a no-payer." The rare-map business is run largely on trust. "There are dealers to whom I would roll up a hundred thousand dollars' worth of maps in a tube and send them, on the basis of a telephone call," Frank Manasek, the Vermont dealer, told me. But with Smiley other dealers learned to insist on cash transactions.

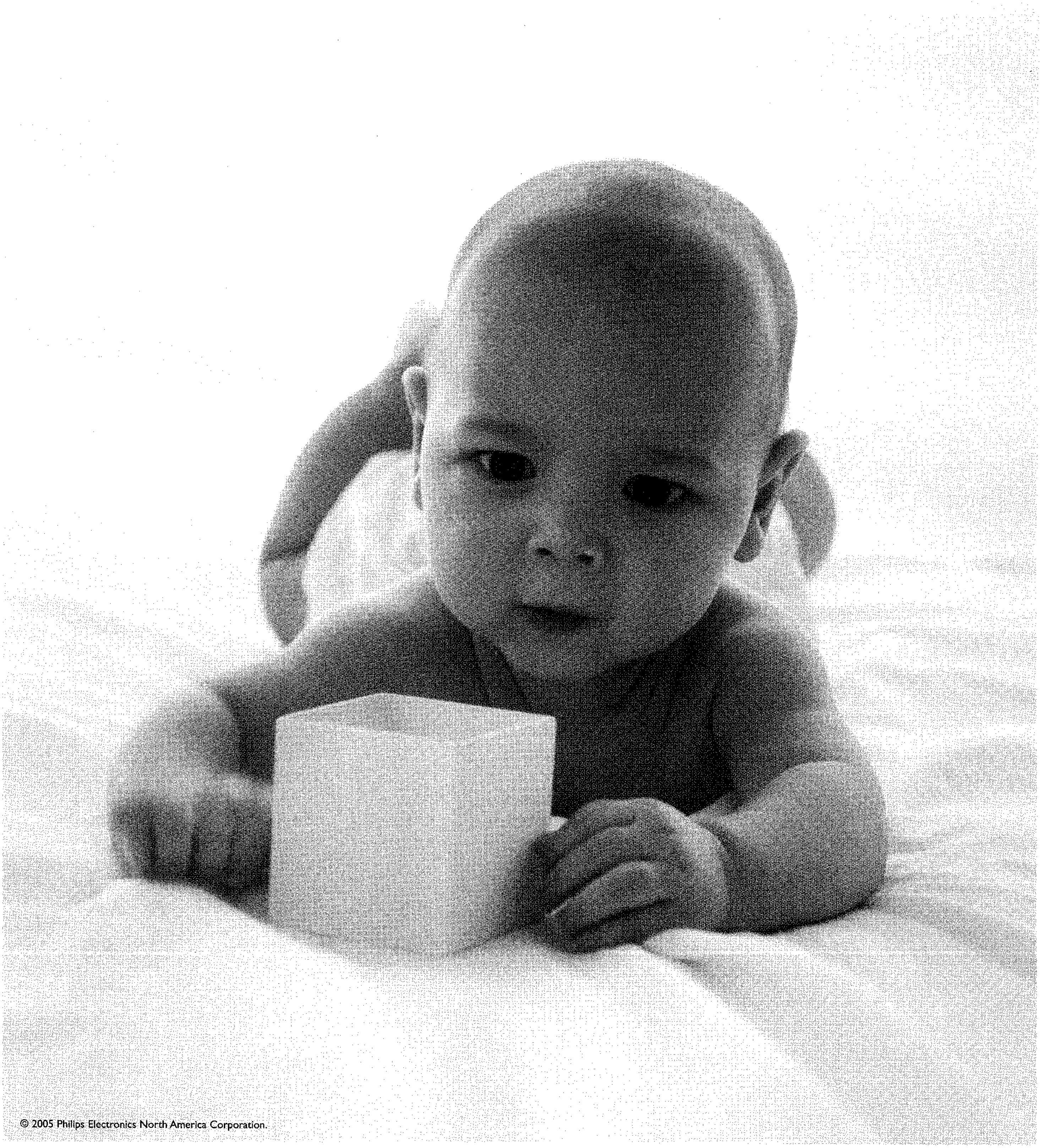
W. Graham Arader III, who likes to introduce himself as "the most successful dealer of the twentieth century," never liked Smiley. Arader, by all accounts (including a 1987 Profile in this magazine), played a leading role in turning old maps into a hot market. His palatial gallery, in a Beaux-Arts mansion on Madison Avenue, is the showpiece of a chain that has branches in Philadelphia, San Francisco, Houston, and King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. His business model relies on impulse buys by unsophisticated walk-in customers, on extra services that he provides to wealthy clients, and on a vast corporate clientele. He and Smiley once clashed over a bounced check, and Arader's determination to beat Smiley at every turn was so intense, according to Ashley Baynton-Williams, that Smiley had to bid anonymously at certain auctions.

I asked Arader if he and Smiley, considering the large difference in the scale of their trading, were really in the same business. "We were in the exact same business," he said. "Servicing the rich. Sycophancy." Arader readily recites a list of major collectors whom he believes Smiley "stole" from him. The charge loses some of its significance when one realizes that Arader's prices are consistently the highest in the trade. But Arader says that the only reason Smiley could "undercut" him was that he was a thief. He added that he had been denouncing Smiley as a thief for years. Arader now shows anyone who is interested (he showed the F.B.I., among others) an e-mail that he wrote in January of this year—five months before Smiley was arrested—to a wealthy collector named Robert Gordon. Gordon, a hedge-fund manager who made his fortune devising legal tax shelters, had been buying maps from Smiley. Referring to Smiley, Arader wrote, "He is a crook. A very bright guy with knowledge, but there is NO WAY that he can be getting these maps legally. He stinks."

I've heard Arader's prescience derided by other dealers. "Graham said that everybody in the trade was a thief, especially when anyone beat him on something," one told me. In this case, of course, his accusations may be borne out. Arader likes to say that most dealers can recognize stolen material when they see it, and have a responsibility to report it. Any dealer who did business with Smiley is, he argues, culpable. Yet Arader himself bought many antique maps from Andrew Antippas, some of which were later determined to have been stolen from Yale.

How do new things become imaginable? Looking at Old World maps, you can see it happen. Around the turn of the sixteenth century, dragons start to withdraw from the seas west of Europe, and landmasses appear. Continents slowly take on more precise shapes. California is discovered but remains an island, in the European mind, for two hundred years. Mapmaking, both science and art, is defined by imaginative leaps—some inspired, some ill-advised. When did Smiley make his leap, assuming that he did?

Everyone in a position to know agrees that Smiley had the talents and the energy to be a very successful antiquarian dealer. His great problem, according to Baynton-Williams, was that he couldn't manage money. He closed his small gallery, on East Fifty-seventh Street, in the early nineteen-nineties, after the rent became too onerous. And in recent years, though he continued to travel on business, some of his big projects were winding down. Work on the Slaughter collection ended after Slaughter died, in 1996, and after the big exhibition at the N.Y.P.L. Leventhal's acquisitions culminated in a book, "Mapping Boston," an exhibition at the Boston Public Library, and the donation of most of the



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collection, in 2003, but Smiley's involvement had ended years before.

In 1985, Norman Leventhal met an architect named Alex Krieger, who taught urban design and planning at Harvard, and who used early maps of Boston in his lectures. Their conversations led Leventhal to wonder if he might be overpaying for the maps he was buying. Krieger brought in another map dealer to appraise Leventhal's collection. The figures that the dealer produced were indeed lower than Smiley's prices—in some cases, much lower. Leventhal, an older man who had taken a quasi-paternal interest in Smiley, was terribly disappointed. Krieger confronted Smiley with the valuations, and Smiley agreed, after some debate, to refund some of Leventhal's money—if not in cash, which he didn't have, then in reduced commissions. Smiley did not stop selling to Leventhal immediately, but their relationship cooled.

Many dealers who had nothing else good to say about Smiley questioned the Leventhal appraisal. "You put a dealer in an awkward position when you ask him to come in and give a 'fair market valuation' of a set of maps," one said. "What the hell is that, anyway? I think that in this case there was some lowballing going on. There were some old scores being settled." Another, who dislikes Smiley, said, "Smiley is an expert, a connoisseur. Leventhal is not. Krieger is not. He can show them things about a map that they won't be able to see even while he's pointing to them." Even Graham Arader said, "A rich guy cares more about not being made a fool of than he cares about getting good value."

Krieger ended up co-editing "Mapping Boston," with David Cobb, the head of the map collection at the Harvard library. Meanwhile, Smiley's own idea for a book had stalled. It was an ambitious project, titled "Printed Charts of New England, 1614-1800," and he had originally hoped to have it published by the New York Public Library's Mercator Society. But that plan was never realistic. "New York Public couldn't say, 'Oh, sure, here's eight hundred thousand dollars to fund and support a book,' " Alice Hudson told me, and someone like Norman Leventhal was not going to be the book's sponsor, either, she said. "So I think it just sort of fell between a lot of cracks. Plus whatever was going on in Forbes's own life."

Alex Krieger, who had taken Smiley's place at Leventhal's side, told me that he had found Smiley "smarmy." Then, in 2003, years after Smiley had disappeared from Leventhal's circle, he turned up, Krieger said, at a gala celebration of the Leventhal bequest, which was worth some seven million dollars, to the Boston Public Library. "And Forbes was so different," Krieger said. "He had been so gregarious before. Now he seemed insecure, very much aged. He was no longer capable of looking people in the eye. I thought it was just that he was nervous because he had lost his relationship with Norman."

E. Forbes Smiley III had no family money. He grew up middle class, in small-town New Hampshire; his father was an engineer for a defense contractor in Nashua. Forbes had been a bookish child, keenly interested in history, and vaguely antiquarian himself—a boyhood friend remembers him building ships in bottles. He attended Hampshire College, where his friends recall his atavistic, miniaturist's skill with knife and wood. They also remember that he could look at an old building, say, and break down its architectural lineage in astonishing detail. He comes from an old New England family—Congregationalist ministers and such—but, financially, Forbes was on his own.

In order to have an apartment in Manhattan, Smiley rented far uptown, in Washington Heights, in what was a high-crime neighborhood when he moved there, in the nineteen-eighties. For a while, he and Lisa had an apartment on the Upper East Side, but in 1997 they gave it up and moved to Martha's Vineyard. And in fact Smiley's "place on the Vineyard" was a dump—a tiny, dark, egg-shaped cabin in Chilmark, at the western end of the island. He and Lisa lived there in the off-season, then rented it out for the exorbitant weekly rates that any habitable structure on the island can command through Labor Day. They had bought an old house and some property, cheaply, in Sebec, Maine, in a remote area in the central part of the state, and they spent their summers there. Smiley threw himself into renovating the house in Sebec, doing most of the work himself, and started a small café and grocery in the town's former general store. Their only child, a son, was born in 1999.

Some people who know Smiley think that, if he was stealing maps, he started only recently, perhaps in response to a financial crisis that occurred in the past few years, and whose outlines are not clear. Earlier this year, he had to pay a fifty-seven-thousand-dollar tax lien that the government had placed on his Martha's Vineyard property. Meanwhile, he sold a sliver of land on the Vineyard, for fifty thousand dollars, knocked down the cabin, and replaced it with a modular home designed by a hip architectural firm in Chelsea.

The boxy, flat-roofed design was a strange choice for Smiley, the Yankee antiquarian who once told a college friend that the only color for a house was white, and the only color for shutters green. It was also a strange choice for Chilmark, a place of quiet wooded lanes, lichen-covered stone walls, and old, gray-shingled farmhouses. "Chilmark character" is a regular topic at community meetings. Smiley's house, which is not yet finished, is regarded locally as an eyesore. Smiley even felt compelled to write a letter to the Martha's Vineyard *Times:* "Please be assured that, as soon as possible, our plans to face this building in old stone and screen it heavily to the road will be accomplished. The building has been designed so that no windows throw their light toward the road, and the building should virtually disappear—both day and night. The best laid plans . . . Thank you for your patience."

That was in February. The place is still a shambles. The long wall facing the road is half tar paper, half rough stone.

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Pallets and generators litter a muddy driveway. The contractor abandoned the project, after a dispute, and the kitchen, imported from Italy, is still crated in the basement. Smiley decided to finish the construction himself. This summer, according to a friend, he and his family were living there without running water. Smiley will not speak to reporters, citing his attorney's instructions. But a friend and neighbor, Judith Bunge, says that Smiley has changed. His greatest trait was always his effusiveness, she told me. "He gets these big ideas," she said. "Sometimes you'd have to pinch him to get him to shut up. He's completely different now. No effusiveness left."

But if you call the number on his Web site you still get a cheerful recording: "Hi. Forbes Smiley on the Vineyard."

Smiley was so nervous at his plea hearing, in New Haven, in August, that he couldn't remember his age. He murmured "Not guilty" to the state's larceny charges. It was a quick, perfunctory appearance. Outside the courtroom, Smiley seemed sober and composed, if stricken. He looked less preppy than professorial—khaki trousers, yellow necktie, wire-rim glasses, graying hair around a still distinguished-looking, balding crown. He was free on a hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars' bail.

By the time of Smiley's arrest, nearly everyone at the upper levels of the map world had had at least some dealings with him. Several other major rare-map repositories announced that they, like Yale, were missing maps. "We think he may have taken two maps," Charles Cullen, the president of the Newberry Library, in Chicago, told the Associated Press. The British Library announced that at least two maps had been removed with a blade from books that Smiley had viewed. The Boston Public Library said that it had found ten maps missing from books viewed by Smiley. The library's president told the Boston *Globe*, "When you feel someone's taken advantage, it's a terrible thing."

At the N.Y.P.L., officials would not discuss their initial findings, citing F.B.I. instructions, but Alice Hudson told me, "I feel very sad. He's still innocent till proven guilty, and all that. But it's a shock. Doesn't seem to fit his personality—who we think he is."

Smiley's main clients of late—collectors like Robert Gordon—will not return press calls. "If you've got maps from Smiley in your collection, you'd be crazy to volunteer that information now," one dealer told me. "The Feds might come and confiscate them all, and never reimburse you." It's been clear for some time that Smiley is coöperating with the F.B.I., which is to say, the U.S. Attorney's office in New Haven. (Crimes related to culturally important works of art fall under the ambit of federal law enforcement, and the maps qualify.) So far, he has been charged by the state prosecutor only with stealing three maps from the Beinecke in June. Those charges together carry a maximum sixty-year sentence. But that leaves, just from the arrest at the Beinecke, the alleged theft of the most valuable map—the de Jode world map, valued at a hundred and fifty thousand dollars—for federal prosecution.

Most of the dealers willing to comment at all have, not surprisingly, tried to distance themselves, socially and ethically, from Smiley. One popular rumor has been that Smiley built up the Slaughter collection, now the pride of the Map Division at the N.Y.P.L., with material he stole from that and other divisions of the library. The same kind of thing is being said about the Leventhal collection at the Boston Public Library. There is no proof yet that either of these rumors is true, but federal agents have been presenting detailed lists of maps to several dealers with whom Smiley has worked. Robert Newman, the proprietor of the Old Print Shop, a family-owned business on Lexington Avenue, says that the F.B.I. has asked for the return of nineteen maps that his shop bought from Smiley during the past four years. Many have been sold, and must now be recovered from customers. Newman has known Smiley for twenty years. "Even when he was arrested, I thought it was a misunderstanding," he told me. "Not anymore." Newman is particularly upset, he says, about an important piece that he bought in 2001—upset with Smiley, of course, but also upset that the institution that lost the piece did not come forward. Newman says that he is under F.B.I. orders not to name the item, but that it's a unique piece, which he advertised nationally, and he believes that the curator who lost it was aware of its loss and of the sale.

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Dealers, in any case, habitually blame libraries for thefts. Librarians are not serious about security, they say. And, when a library is robbed, library administrators don't report it, out of shame and, especially, out of fear that donors and potential donors will hear about it. Donors, after all, expect that their bequests will be kept safe forever, not pillaged. Smiley himself, friends say, fears that libraries and museums, busy now with their internal audits, will blame him for every missing map, whether or not he had anything to do with its disappearance. There's probably an excellent chance of that.

At a court appearance in New Haven last week—it was just a formality, to obtain a continuance—Smiley looked ten years older, and twenty pounds lighter, than he did two months ago. His cheeks were hollow, his eyes wounded-looking. Smiley had coronary surgery a few years ago, and is apparently facing back surgery now. Speaking quietly with his lawyer in court, his face periodically flexed, in a sudden rictus, a mirthless smile. It seemed like a wince, but Bill Reese, who has known Smiley for twenty years, said it's a habit he's always had.

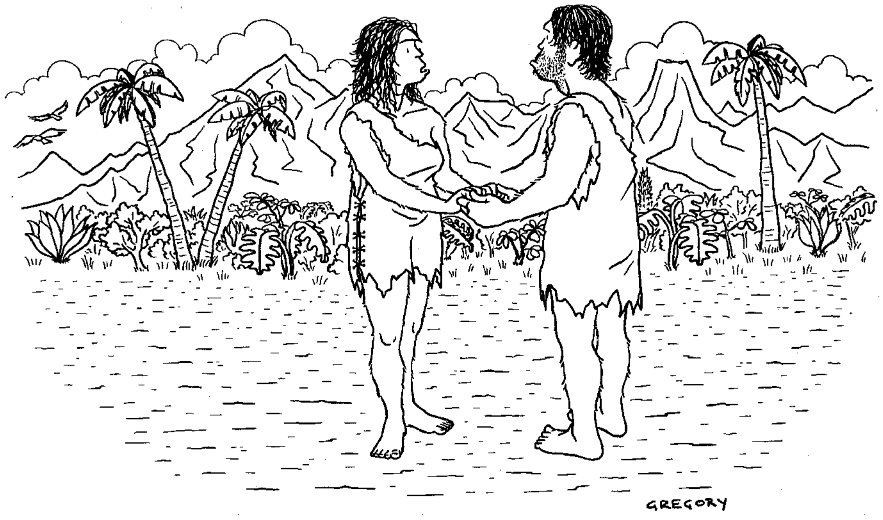
Anyone can go into the Beinecke and look at a rare book. All you need to register is two forms of photo I.D. Say you wanted to look at "The Atlantic Neptune," a three-volume atlas by J. F. W. Des Barres, published in London, 1775-1781. The old leather-bound books are at least three feet high and two feet across, and their covers look heavily weathered. A staff member carries each volume out of the stacks and into the reading room, where he carefully places it on big foam wedges, so that no part of it touches the hard table. The atlas is made up of huge folded maps, browned, water-stained. When you open one, you have to be careful about deterioration along the folds.

"The Atlantic Neptune" contains a set of nautical charts of the East Coast of North America, from Nova Scotia to the Caribbean. All are meticulous copperplate engravings—some with aquatint, with added hand color, others printed in sepia. The coastline is rendered in detail both lush and precise—wooded mountains, farmland, headlands, towns—and yet the steady purpose of every map is clearly navigation, and nothing takes precedence over soundings and rhumb lines. Sailing instructions are included on most of the charts, gracefully calligraphed inside cartouches of various shapes—oval, spherical, square, even some tacked at an angle across inland hills to look as if they were pinned there. Some charts have landscape images, drawn from a ship's-level view, in round insets, and the images are so vivid, so naturalistic, that at first glance they look like photographs. Nearly all the charts are bordered with vignettes—different views of the land from the sea, from specified distances and compass points, with ships sailing in the foreground, or maybe men working in clouds of steam on the hull of a man-of-war.

The pleasures of studying such an atlas are aesthetic and antiquarian, but they are also moral. The maps feel like a pure Enlightenment product; they seem to have no agenda. They merely want to get ships and sailors safely from place to place. Of course, "The Atlantic Neptune" was not really created in a vacuum. These splendid charts were commissioned by the British Royal Navy as part of the British struggle against the French for New World dominion. They were rushed to completion as an atlas for use against the American rebels in the Revolutionary War. J. F. W. Des Barres, though born in Switzerland, was a naturalized British subject. He even inserted, in some editions, siege and battle plans. His maps became the standard navigational charts for the North American East Coast for the next fifty years. But they were never neutral.

"The Atlantic Neptune" is a great hodgepodge of foxed paper. Each volume probably spent, just to start, decades aboard a ship in the Age of Sail, being hard-used, knocked about. Different maps were bound in, depending on a captain's needs, and the handwritten table of contents rarely corresponds exactly to a volume's actual contents. In theory, the Beinecke could have an exhaustive description of every one of its half a million rare books, but, even then, the staff couldn't possibly inspect every page of every book after each use. On any given day, fifteen or twenty patrons sit at the long tables of the Beinecke reading room, many with laptops propped beside them, some with magnifying glasses, peering at ancient books and manuscripts. Most of the time, what can be found, distilled, in that room, is the sweet and humane beauty of libraries, their deeply civilized spirit.

In recent years, the Beinecke has made security improvements. However, George Miles, the curator of Western Americana at the library, told me, "We're in the business of being vulnerable. If we're not, we're probably obstructing scholarship." There are items, Miles said, that do need to be locked up—"things that are extremely valuable and not of much research value, like the signatures of the Founding Fathers." But those items are few. When I asked about a document that is said to be worth more than a million dollars, Miles said, "We let people handle it. Sure." ♦



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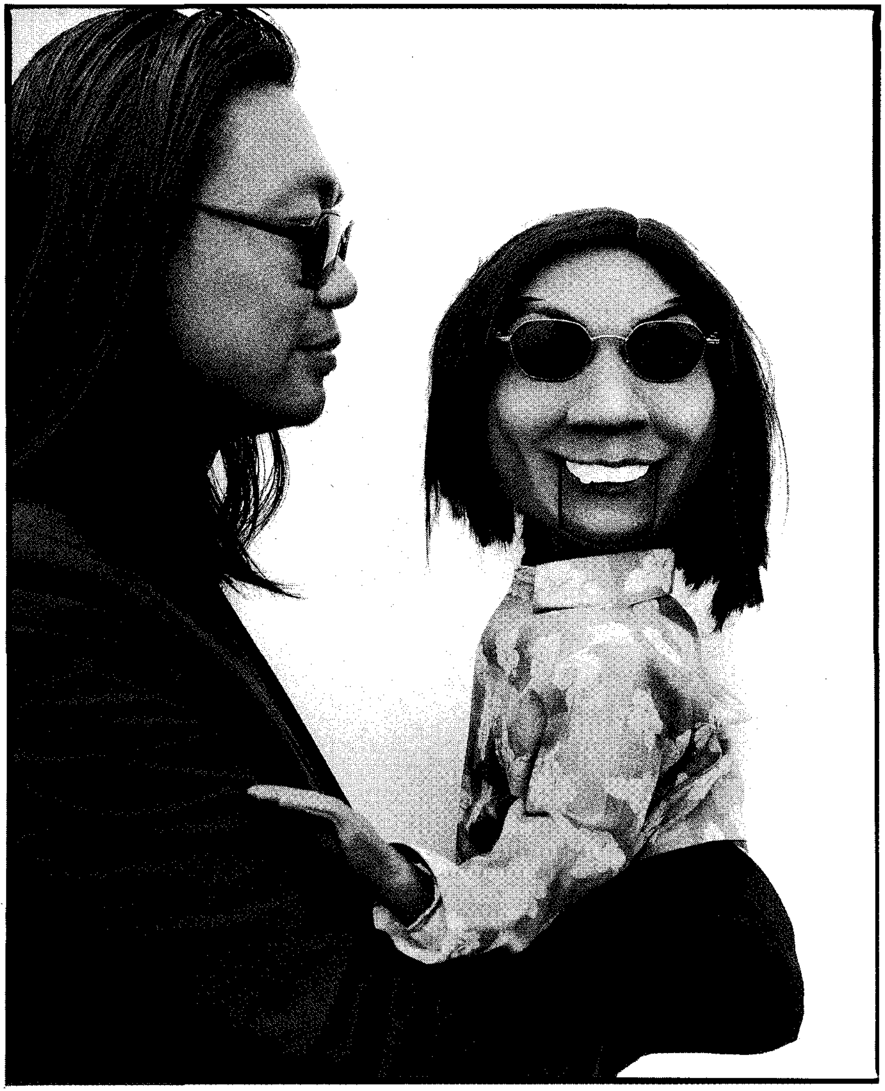
The spectator as artist.

BY CALVIN TOMKINS



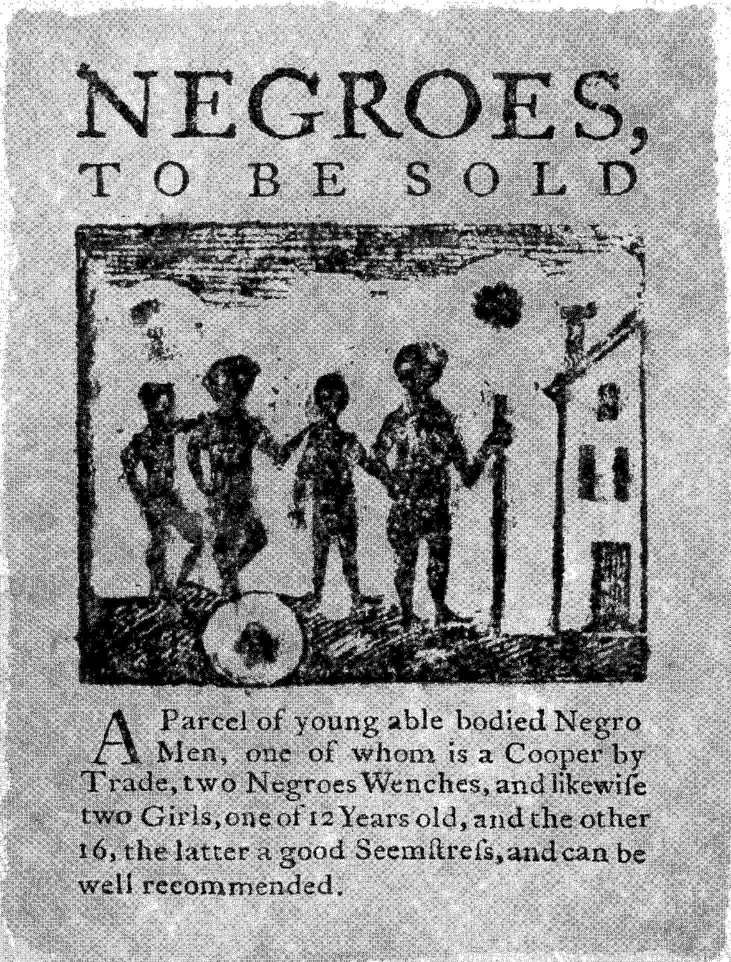
Rirkrit Tiravanija, with a look-alike puppet. Photograph by Ruven Afanador.

For a long time, artists have wanted us to do more work. Minimalism, conceptual art, and a host of other trends have validated Marcel Duchamp's 1957 statement that the artist performs only one part of the creative act—that it is up to the spectator to complete the process by becoming, in one way or another, an active participant. Spectators do tend to malinger, of course, and to long for the days when the simple act of looking at art was supposed to give pleasure, but this hasn't discouraged the art-instigators one whit. Ankle-deep in the twenty-first century, we are beset on all sides by strange, hybrid art forms that insist we meet them halfway, or better.

Rirkrit Tiravanija, a Thai artist who has become a vivid presence on the international art circuit during the past decade, not only welcomes but depends on this collaborative embrace between artist and spectator. One of his early works, for a 1991 group show of Asian artists in New York, was a phonograph and a recording of the song "Shall We Dance?" from "The King and I"; anyone who cared to could dance with the artist, whose silky black hair and friendly manner offset his shortcomings as a ballroom dancer, and who spent as much time on duty as he could manage during the show's run. Several of Tiravanija's pieces in the nineteen-nineties consisted of his cooking Thai curries and other specialties for gallerygoers. The food, the surprise of receiving it, and the soothing personality of the artist allowed willing participants to enter a situation that lay somewhere between performance art and gastronomy. Tiravanija's art has to do mainly with social experiences and interactions, not painting or sculpture. His contribution to a group show called "Sleepless Nights," at the P.S. 1 art center, in Queens, in 1993, was four beds for weary viewers, and two years later, at the Whitney Museum's Biennial, he placed three electric guitars and a set of drums on a platform and let it be known (by word of mouth) that visitors were allowed to play them. "I make things that people can use," he told me last spring. "My starting point was looking at the things in museums, like Thai artifacts, which were generally Buddhas or old potteries, and thinking, Well, everybody understands that there's a culture there, that these are beautiful objects, but you don't really see the people around it. You just see the craft or whatever, but no life. I was trying to bring back the life, to reanimate it in some way."

Like many artists of his generation, Tiravanija, who is forty-four, has a global practice. Besides a three-room apartment in New York's East Village, he keeps a modest flat in Berlin and a loft in Bangkok, but he spends relatively little time in any of these places, because he is usually taking part in an exhibition somewhere else. The proliferation of international art shows—biennials, triennials, art fairs, and festivals in cities large and small, from Venice and São Paulo to Johannesburg and Fukuoka—has brought to prominence a new breed of nomadic, post-studio artists who travel from place to place, making and installing their pieces on the spot, often with funds provided by the exhibition's organizers. Most of the artists know each other, and sometimes collaborate on joint projects.

IT HAPPENED HERE



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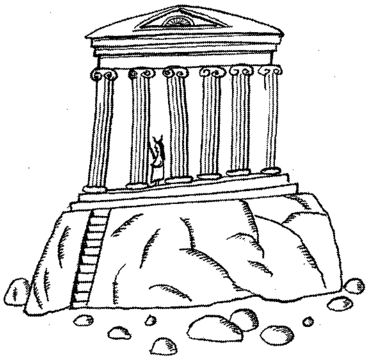
No artist has been more active on the global art circuit than Tiravanija, and the past two years have brought him recognition on a scale he seems to find somewhat embarrassing. As the winner of the 2004 Hugo Boss Prize, a biennial award for significant achievement in contemporary art, he had a show last fall at the Guggenheim Museum in New York. In one of the upper-level galleries he built a low-power television station "to demonstrate how individuals can be active contributors to their own media culture, rather than mere consumers of it." The film being broadcast over the closed-circuit monitor was a nineteen-seventies fictional documentary called "Punishment Park"; it showed American antiwar protesters being brutalized and even shot by police, which, in the light of Abu Ghraib and other recent horrors, came as a reminder that Tiravanija's art has more levels than you might think. In addition to the Guggenheim show, a Tiravanija retrospective has been making successive appearances in Chiang Mai (Thailand), Rotterdam, Paris, and London; in each place, the exhibition took a different form, as if to emphasize the difficulties of mounting this kind of survey of an artist who doesn't actually make art objects. I took in the fourth and final version, in London, where it opened on July 4th, at the Serpentine Gallery.

The Serpentine is a pleasant, small museum situated in Kensington Park. The British art crowd turns out for its lively exhibitions of contemporary work, but the place also draws quite a few strollers who have no idea what they're going to see. Rochelle Steiner, its American-born curator, says that this spontaneity makes it especially well suited to Tiravanija's work, which, as she put it, "is fundamentally about bringing people together." Steiner steered me through the exhibition, which was opening three days later. In the front room, the sole object was a four-thousand-piece jigsaw puzzle on a table, and some wooden stools for visitors to sit on while they worked at putting it together. To the right, in a vitrine, was a replica of the artist's Thai passport, a remarkable document whose accordion-pleated additions stretched off from the matrix at odd angles; to the left, another small room housed a single painting by Tiravanija (who rarely paints), with white letters on a black ground spelling out the words "LESS OIL MORE COURAGE."

The main part of the exhibition was in three larger rooms in back. Two of them had been made into more or less exact plywood replicas of Tiravanija's walkup apartment in New York, positioned as mirror images of each other. Each apartment had a fully stocked kitchen, a tiny bedroom with a mattress covering the floor, and a slightly larger room with a sofa, two chairs, and a large-screen TV. (Tiravanija's apartment is a recurrent theme in his work; he re-created it for an exhibition in Cologne, in 1996, and in 1999 he did it again, in New York.) The artist often specifies "lots of people" as one of the materials in his work, and plenty of them showed up at the Serpentine. They made themselves at home in the two apartments, and a young woman in filmy summer silks, who fell asleep on one of the beds, needed to be awakened by a guard when the museum was closing. In between the two apartments was a space that had been fitted out as a broadcasting studio. The centerpiece of the show was a radio play that dramatized, in a mixture of goofy science fiction and biographical fact, the story of Tiravanija's life and his career; it was broadcast every day, in fifteen-minute segments, over an experimental London station called Resonance FM. The script, mapped out by Tiravanija and written by two associates, followed the adventures of a pair of time-travellers from the future, who project themselves back to New York in the late eighties and visit seven of the artist's exhibitions. Their descriptions and comments were audible to Serpentine visitors in the "studio," or over small radio receivers scattered throughout the galleries.



I wondered how this would be received by sophisticated Londoners, but when I met Tiravanija later in the day, at an art opening in the East End, he didn't seem at all concerned about it. (As it turned out, the London critics loved the show, and Richard Dorment, in the *Telegraph*, called Tiravanija "a major figure in contemporary art.") "Usually, before an exhibition I'm always doing something," Tiravanija told me, "but this time I don't really have to do anything. It's all done." There was going to be a small private preview of his retrospective the next day, a Sunday, and Tiravanija had agreed to cook lunch for everybody, in one of his two kitchens at the Serpentine.

That's where I found him at noon, cutting up kingfish, pork sausage, bamboo shoots, and small green eggplants, and preparing coriander potatoes and cucumber salad. He wore what he usually wears: olive-green Swedish worker's pants with copious pockets, a lightweight navy pin-striped jacket, sneakers, and rose-colored prescription sunglasses. One of Tiravanija's three New York studio assistants was helping him in the kitchen. Two or three artists, friends of Tiravanija's who had come to London for the Serpentine opening, had established themselves there as well, drinking beer and talking about the Live 8 rock concert that had drawn more than two hundred thousand people to Hyde Park the day before. Tiravanija seemed to have time for everybody. I joined a group in the living room to watch part of the Wimbledon final between Roger Federer and Andy Roddick. Once or twice, I found myself wondering how all this differed from being in Tiravanija's place in New York, where I had gone for lunch a month earlier, and I decided that there was no difference. Did it become an art work this time because it was in a museum? Applying the Duchamp principle, I guessed that it would become a true art work only if some of us spectators pitched in to complete it, and apparently a lot of people did just that during the next few weeks. Rochelle Steiner informed me that "an Estonian man" took up residence in one apartment, cooking lunch for whoever was in the mood for it, and attempting to teach Estonian to the diners. Graffiti, posters, and written comments proliferated on the walls, many of them with rude messages to George Bush and Tony Blair. There was a two-day break in the programming because of the July 7th subway and bus bombing, but visitors continued to come in large numbers, and someone initiated a book exchange, with paperbacks left for others to take.

At one point, I squeezed into the kitchen, where Tiravanija was still cooking. To what degree, I asked him, did his work depend on his physical presence? "No degree at all," he said, beaming. "Really not. It doesn't need me." Tiravanija's presence does exert a certain charisma, but it runs on very low wattage. When I inquired, a little later in the afternoon, how he managed to avoid becoming a celebrity, he laughed uproariously and said, "Just don't be one! You have to not want to be one. Probably being Thai helps. I would like to be a bonefish. You know it's in the water, but you don't see it—can't catch it!"

At the opening, the next day, several hundred people milled through the Serpentine and a temporary open-air pavilion that had recently gone up nearby. Men, women, and children were trying out the beds, and both kitchens were a mess. It was too noisy to hear the actors reading the prelude to the radio play. Tiravanija stood by himself outside the museum, against a wall that was catching some rare London sunshine. He held a portable radio to his ear, listening to the plummy tones of a British actor reading one of the parts. "Sounds good," he said. And a moment later, with gentle irony, "Riveting!" He told me what he had said back in New York, that when this retrospective cycle was over he looked forward to "doing less." He and his new wife, Annette Aurell (they got married at City Hall in April), are building a house in Chiang Mai, at the base of the foothills of the Himalayas. They plan to make this their home, and Tiravanija intends to cut down on the number of exhibitions he accepts. He is keeping his New York and Berlin apartments, though, and he's just bought a small property in western New York, near the Pennsylvania line; and he will continue to teach one full semester each year in the art department at Columbia, where he has been on the faculty since 1999, so he will still be spending a lot of his time on airplanes and adding new sections to his passport.

Gavin Brown, his New York dealer, a forty-one-year-old Englishman whose occasionally scathing manners and unkempt black beard remind me of Bluto, Popeye's nemesis, believes that Tiravanija, to whom he is very close, may indeed be starting a new chapter in life. But Brown gets annoyed by the perception of his friend as a gentle, passive soul.

"People say his work is about generosity, about the social sphere in the best utopian sense," he told me at the Serpentine opening. "I think that's a very one-dimensional view. Look at his painting 'Less Oil More Courage'—it's not about being nice, or bringing people together. There's a lot of anger in the work, and a lot of aggression. Reticence, too, of course. I think that speaks to how complicated it is to talk about his art at all. With Rirkrit, where do you stop and the work starts? Sometimes it's all in what you bring to it, and his willingness to let that happen."

Rirkrit—we'll call him that from now on, as everybody does, pronouncing it without the second "r"—was born in 1961 in Buenos Aires, where his father was an official at the Thai Embassy. His mother was, and is, an oral surgeon. The family returned to Bangkok when Rirkrit was three, and he remembers being unhappy there. He was sick a lot—the heat bothered him—and he hated his Thai grade school. Growing up with two busy parents and a younger sister, he felt particularly close to his maternal grandmother, who had been a teacher and a school principal; after being sent to France by the Thai government to study nutrition, she came back and opened, in the back yard of her house—and with the help of her husband, a deputy minister of education, who was also a horticulturist—the first garden restaurant in Bangkok. "I spent a lot of time with her," Rirkrit told me. "I loved to watch her cook."

The Tiravanijas moved to Ethiopia in 1968, when Rirkrit's father was posted to the Embassy in Addis Ababa. The high altitude there made it cool year-round. Rirkrit went to an international school, rode around on donkeys, and learned to speak English. When the fam-

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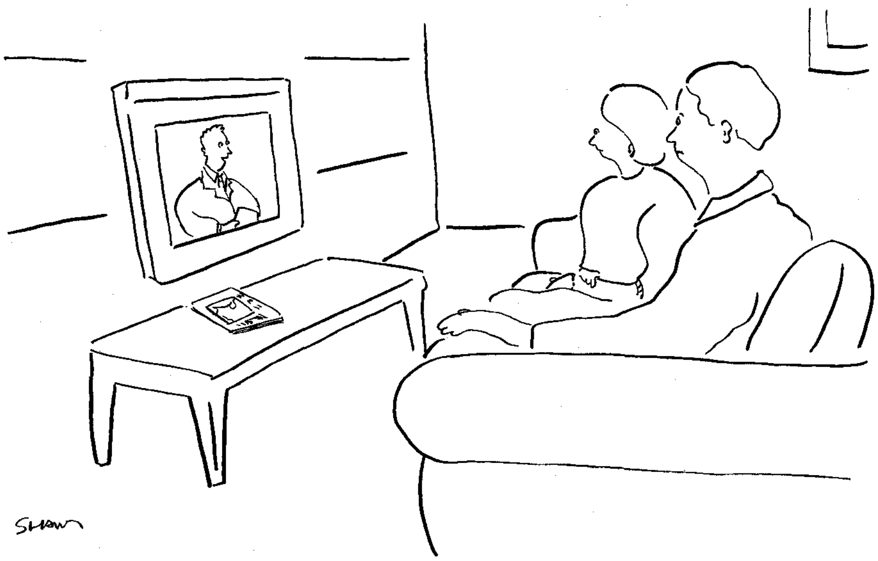


"And, in suburban news, construction of the new, attached four-season solarium at 6870 Evercrest Drive continued amid the silent, seething envy of the neighbors."

• •

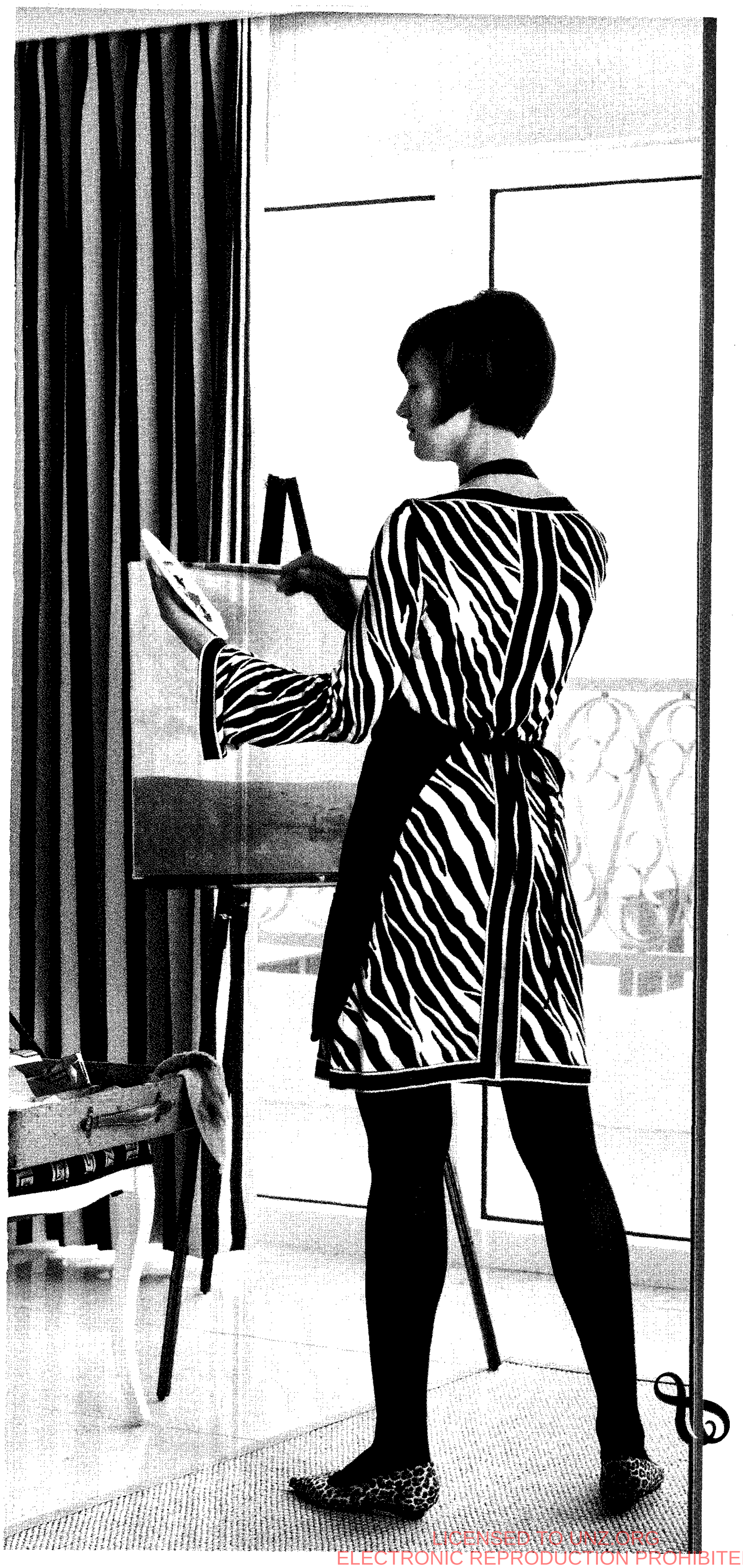
ily returned to Bangkok two years later, he was sent to a Catholic school. Although Rirkrit had been brought up as a Buddhist, Thai Buddhism is "very generous and forgiving," as he puts it, and able to accommodate other beliefs. "The school cut me off from my own culture in a way," he told me, "but what I learned later is that you don't have to look very hard for that, because it's just there." He left home when he was nineteen, to go to Carleton University, in Ottawa. His ambition then was to become a photojournalist, but early in his freshman year, as he sat in an art-history class that he had signed up for quite by chance, two slides projected on a screen changed everything for him. One slide showed Kazimir Malevich's "White on White," an abstract painting of a white square superimposed on a white ground; the second slide showed Duchamp's "Fountain," a porcelain urinal turned upside down and presented as sculpture. Rirkrit, who knew almost nothing about art, was so excited by these images that he "just kind of ran out and went to the first art school I could find," as he told me. "It was a realization that there was something important in art, and something I would like to do. When I saw those slides, I saw how I would like my life to be—that a different reality was possible. I knew I wanted to be an artist, and I knew what kind of artist. I didn't want to be traditional. I wanted to find new ways to think about art."

He transferred to the Ontario College of Art & Design, in Toronto, and spent the next two years absorbing the diverse realities of modernism. Duchamp led him to the writings of the composer John Cage, whose use of chance methods (tossing coins, etc.) to make musical decisions was inspired in some part by Duchamp and by Zen Buddhism. "I started to make things based on chance ideas," Rirkrit said. "They weren't interesting—what was interesting was to talk about the ideas." Conceptual, idea-based art was in full flower, and Rirkrit, with his rapidly improving English, was a good talker. ("I'm not articulate," he says, "but I can talk.") His other big influences in art school were Jean Tinguely, the Swiss master of kinetic sculpture, and Joseph Beuys, the postwar German artist, teacher, and shamanistic proponent of what he called "social sculpture," which included such mesmerizing public actions as his "explaining" art to a dead hare, and spending a week in a gallery with a live coyote. Rirkrit wanted to go beyond Duchamp and Beuys. "One way to deal with what Duchamp did," as he told me, "would be to take the urinal and re-install it back on the wall and piss into it." If the single absolute necessity of modern art was that it had to be useless, in other words, new thinking might require it to become useful.

He was not the first contemporary artist to reach that conclusion, of course; Siah Armajani, Scott Burton, and others of the art-in-public-places school had been designing bridges, gardens, furniture, and other functional art works for years. Closer to home, in 1971 the artist Gordon Matta-Clark started a restaurant called Food in New York's SoHo, staffed it with fellow-artists, and pronounced it a work of sculpture. But Rirkrit's Asian background gave him a somewhat less object-centered view of the old form-versus-function dispute in Western art. In Canada, he found himself thinking a lot about Thailand. "I knew about basketball, baseball, McDonald's, and I had desires for all things Western," he once said, "but when I got to this side I realized I knew nothing about my own culture."

New York was an hour from Toronto by air. Rirkrit came down for a visit during his second year of art school, and he moved to lower Manhattan in 1982. Through a classmate, he found the apartment that he lives in today, a dilapidated fourth-floor walkup on East Seventh Street, which he shared initially with two female friends. It was rent-controlled, at two hundred and ninety-nine dollars a month. "The walls were buckling and falling apart," Rirkrit recalls, "but I never let anyone in to work on the place, for fear I'd get kicked out." Whenever the woman who lived above them washed her floor, the water rained down through the ceiling. One of his roommates went back to Canada, but others kept turning up. For a while, there were twelve of them living there, in three small rooms. "Always people moving in and out," Rirkrit said. "I find it a perfect layout for a shared space."

Shy but savvy, Rirkrit had entrepreneurial talents that might have made him a successful art dealer. His many jobs included driving a truck for an art mover; on weekends, he turned the truck into a mobile art gallery for himself and others. He worked part time for several commercial galleries, helping to install exhibitions. He also managed to get any number of small grants. On his own time, he painted monochrome canvases (small squares coated uniformly with



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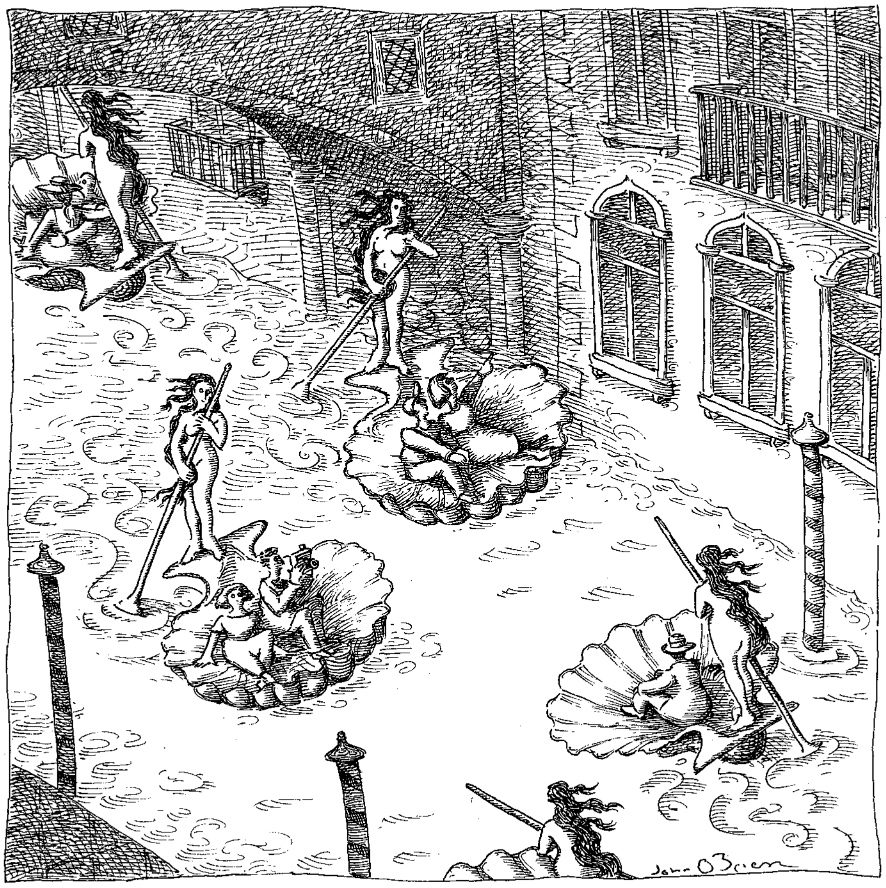
peach-colored paint, for example), and made objects and multiples, most of which involved food—backpacks containing recipes and the utensils to cook them, aprons with sausages printed on them (plus a recipe for sausage), cooked curry dishes in sealed cans. In college, he had discovered that he knew how to cook Thai food. Every Sunday night in Toronto, he would cook for a dozen or more people, most of whom showed up uninvited. In addition to these various activities, he spent a year in the Studio Program at the Whitney Museum. He met a lot of artists, and went to all the right gallery openings. Everybody liked him, although no one seemed to know what sort of art he did. This changed in 1989, when he was invited to be in a group show organized by the neo-expressionist artist Robert Longo, at the Scott Hanson Gallery, in SoHo. His contribution naturally involved food: on four milk-carton pedestals placed at the gallery's entrance Rirkrit prepared and cooked a Thai curry. Visitors could see it and smell it, but that was all; the results just sat there on the pedestals until Rirkrit cooked a new curry, which he did once a week. But something wasn't right, he realized: "There was too much distance between the work and the people looking at the work, so the next step . . . was to start cooking and letting people eat."

That happened a few months later, when he had his first solo show. It was at the Paula Allen Gallery, on Broadway, and it was called "Untitled 1990 (Pad Thai)." People who came to the opening found Rirkrit at a cooking station in a small room adjacent to the main gallery, making pad thai and serving it on plastic plates. Quite a few visitors assumed that he was the caterer. According to Randy Alexander, who worked with Paula Allen and had invited Rirkrit to show there, "Rirkrit's idea was just to leave everything as it was, so the detritus of the opening was the formal work people would see when they came into the space the next day. We had a concern about the olfactory presence of rotting food, but because of the spices he used it never went beyond obnoxious."

Alexander was impressed by Rirkrit. "His gestures, his style, his elegance all became a part of the piece," he remembers. "But at the same time he had this casual, funny, normal side. I never heard a critical word about him from anyone, and in the art world that was pretty unique." Later that year, when Alexander started his own gallery, Rirkrit was the first artist he showed. For this one, "Untitled 1990 (Blind)," Rirkrit offered a voice-activated tape recorder, a pair of binoculars on the windowsill, and a floor strewn with discarded envelopes containing audiocassettes that Rirkrit had recorded; viewers could make use of these items or not. Alexander served Rolling Rock beer at the opening, because he could get it at a discount. "Rirkrit liked the bottles," he remembers. "I stacked them up in their original cartons and we made a piece of it." The effect that Rirkrit and his work have on some people is not easily explicable. Gavin Brown, who came in one day, was working then for Lisa Spellman at the increasingly influential 303 Gallery, but he thought of himself as an artist—he had gone to art school in London. Something about the four cases of stacked green bottles pierced his soul. "It irritated me so much!" he remembers. "Beer bottles in their cardboard cases, all empty, tops off. It wasn't like a found object—there was so much more to it than that. I could feel this in waves, even though there was almost nothing to it. It was an object that seemed to say, 'You don't realize how little everything else matters.' I couldn't get it out of my head." Brown hadn't yet met the artist, so his reaction, we must assume, was purely aesthetic.

It was around this time that Rirkrit met Elizabeth Peyton. She was twenty-five, an aspiring artist with a job as a photo researcher. She had been noticing Rirkrit at galleries and openings—someone she thought of as "that cute Thai guy." Her boyfriend at the time referred to Rirkrit once as "a real ladies' man," but he didn't strike her that way. "I thought he seemed really sweet," she recalls. "Every time I saw him, I'd think, Wow, what a great smile he has." They finally met when he came to her boyfriend's birthday party. A few weeks later, she ran into him at an art opening. Rirkrit's visa was about to expire. "It was a desperate moment, in a way," he told me, "and I had started talking to people about the idea of getting married. Nobody got married then. But somehow I mentioned



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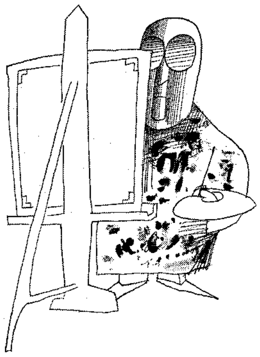
it to Elizabeth. I said, 'I really have to get married, because otherwise I'm going to get kicked out of the country.' And she said, 'I'll marry you.' We got married a few weeks later, and Elizabeth moved into my place. We were together for about three years." The marriage fell apart in the mid-nineties, when Rirkrit began spending more and more time on the international exhibition circuit. At first, Peyton's job kept her from travelling with him. "That was hard for me," she said, "because I was very young, and unsure of myself, and dependent, but it became a good thing, because I had to be more independent, and that's when I started painting a lot. I was excited for Rirkrit, but jealous, too. I felt like, now's my chance, I can't be following around after Rirkrit. It made me sad, because I totally loved him, but I kind of forced myself to end it." Peyton's small, intensely romanticized portraits of friends and famous people, both historical (Napoleon) and contemporary (Kurt Cobain), have made her a successful and admired artist. Like Rirkrit, she shows with Gavin Brown, and she and Rirkrit have remained close, both personally and professionally; they didn't get divorced until last year. Peyton and Tony Just, the painter she lives with now, came to the wedding party after Rirkrit and Annette Aurell got married last April, and a few days later the newlyweds spent the weekend with Peyton and Just at their house on the North Fork of Long Island.



Gavin Brown arranged for Rirkrit to be in a group show at the 303 Gallery in the fall of 1991. The show was called "True to Life." The artist Andrea Zittel had a live chicken running around loose in the gallery. Rirkrit's contribution was a table with two burners, two pots of boiling water, and ten dozen raw eggs. At the opening, a gallerist named Tom Cugliani, instead of boiling an egg, picked one up and smashed it against the wall. Several other people did the same thing. Elizabeth Peyton, who was there, said later that it was sort of frightening, a look into the dark side of the freedom that Rirkrit's work embodied. "It was the first time I saw that hardness in his work," she wrote later, in a catalogue note, "and I thought, 'Wow, Rirkrit's going to go all the way.' " But did Rirkrit foresee that people would throw eggs? "I didn't anticipate it," he said, "but I wasn't surprised." According to Peyton, he certainly wasn't dismayed. "I think he almost expected it," Peyton told me. "Rirkrit is not aggressive, he's very gentle, but at the same time he's quite fierce. His attitude of not saying no to anything was clearly going to include a larger chunk of the world." Rirkrit joined the 303 Gallery soon afterward (Randy Alexander was closing his), and for his first solo show there he had all the office equipment moved out to the main gallery—desks, file cabinets, furniture, window blinds—and turned the office space into a kitchen where red and green curries were cooked and served by the gallery staff. Rirkrit cooked for the opening, although not afterward.

Offers to show his work started to come in after that, many of them from Europe. At the Venice Biennale in 1993, Rirkrit was placed next to Damien Hirst in the "Aperto" ("Open") section; his piece, called "Untitled 1993 (twelve seventy-one)," was an aluminum canoe equipped with two pots of boiling water and two stacks of Cup o' Noodles, in honor of Marco Polo's voyage from Venice to China in 1271 and his mythical introduction of the noodle to Italian cuisine. Somewhat to Rirkrit's surprise, the piece was bought not long afterward by a Cincinnati collector named Andy Stillpass. ("There was something about Rirkrit that I'd love to have in my life," Stillpass told me.) His work was getting some positive reviews. "Rirkrit Tiravanija's affecting fusion of process and performance art is as messy as it is pure," Roberta Smith wrote in the *Times*. "What Mr. Tiravanija really rearranges are expectations. . . . He imbues the role of the artist with an almost religious humbleness while remaining very much in control." Some of his cooking utensils from the early shows were starting to sell. I wondered how Rirkrit felt about that: if the work was supposed to be about social interaction, what did an unwashed wok that he'd bought and used once have to do with it? "I didn't think it through at first," he told me, "but then I realized, yeah, there was a problem. What I do now is ask people to use what they buy. Cook a meal, invite people to eat with you, have your own experience. The value and the meaning are in the use." Eileen Cohen, a collector who began buying Rirkrit's work very early, gave a party in her apartment last spring to "reanimate" a cooking piece of Rirkrit's that she had just acquired. Three handsome stainless-steel pots stood on pedestals, over propane stoves, cooking three different kinds of dumpling—mild vegetarian, not-so-mild veal, and highly spiced beef. I also saw a wok from one of Rirkrit's first pieces, crusted with ten-year-old shrimp curry, displayed on a shelf in Cohen's library, next to a Hopi ceramic pot.

Gavin Brown, by this time, had abandoned his ambitions to be an artist and decided to make his living as a dealer. Brown built his gallery, Gavin Brown's Enterprise, around Rirkrit. "It was as though I understood what he was saying, and I was the only person who could hear it," Brown said. Rirkrit, who avoids confrontation, wasn't able to tell Lisa Spellman that he was defecting from 303; Brown finally had to do so. (Spellman seems not to have forgiven him; she declined to be interviewed on the subject.) Rirkrit and Brown were like brothers, with diametrically opposite and somewhat competitive personalities. Abrasive to the point of rudeness at times, Brown took issue with what he saw as a masochistic streak in Rirkrit's passivity. "I see so many things in the work that maybe he doesn't," Brown told me. "In one sense, the whole thing is just a crashing, fucking bore, all excruciatingly embarrassing. I've seen that, too, and acted to change it." When Rirkrit remade, for the 1995 Whitney Biennial, a piece he had done earlier at Brown's gallery, which at the time was on Broome Street, with electric guitars and a set of drums for anyone to play, Brown couldn't resist taking it over at the opening. "I had some friends who were musicians," Brown said, "and I thought the opening was a time to kind of blow this thing up, so I kicked Rirkrit's friends off the guitars. If you're going to have amplified music in a museum, you've got to be as aggressive as possible, and this turned into the most extraordinary situation. There was no beginning and no end to

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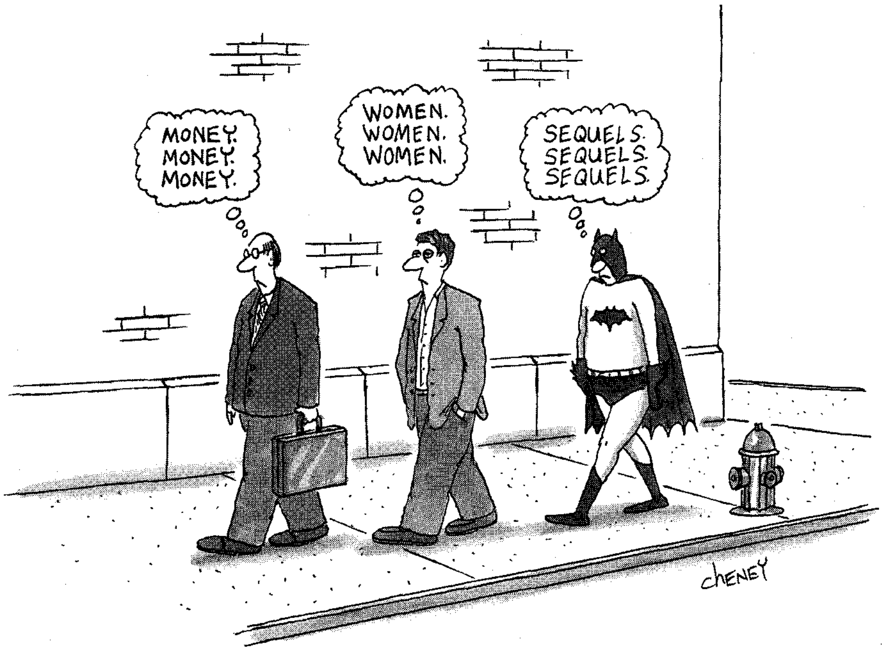


the music. I can remember Patti Smith standing against a wall and just screaming. But Rirkrit was pissed off at me for a few days."

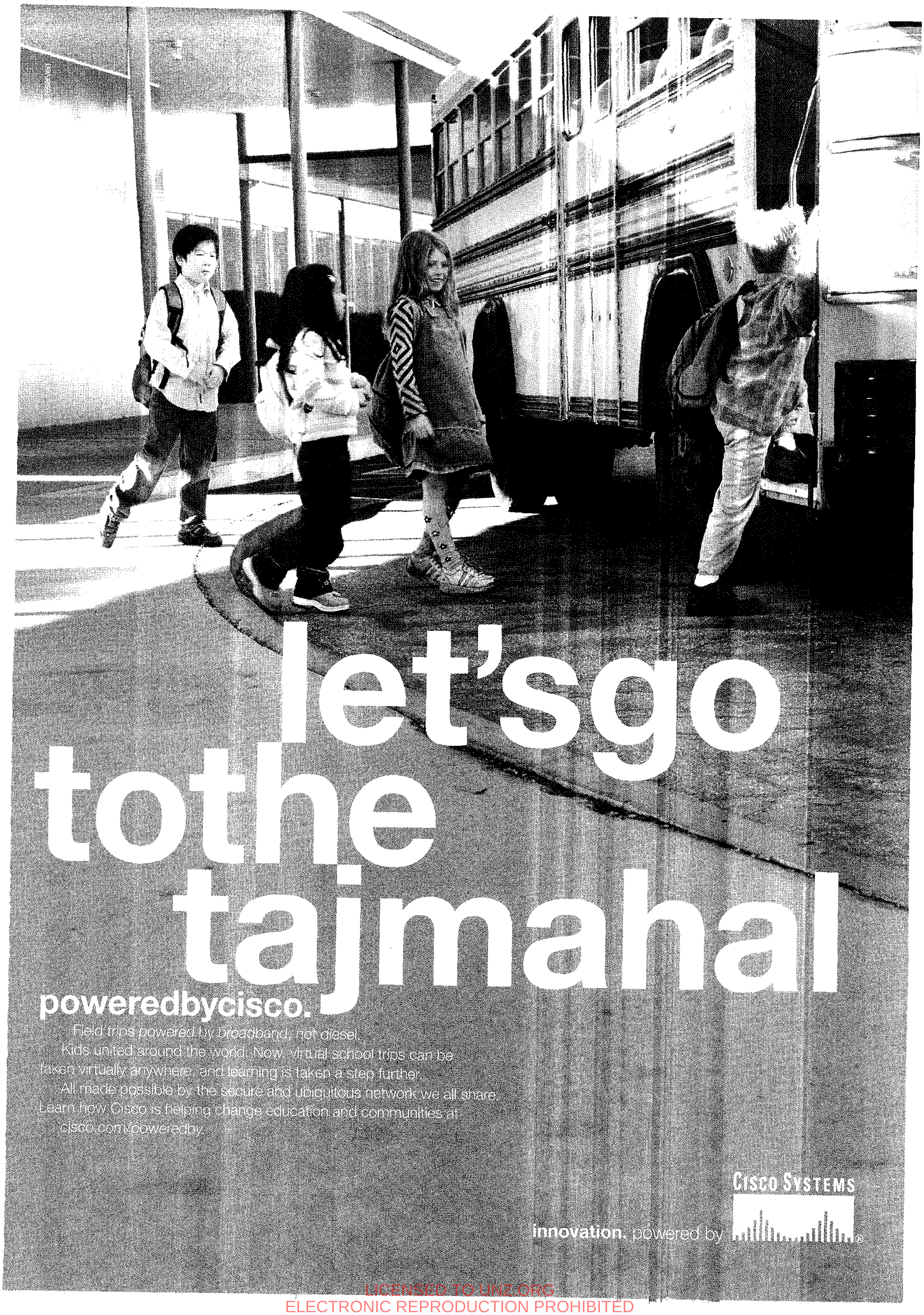
David Ross, the Whitney's director at the time, remembers this piece as "one of the highlights of my time at the Whitney, an enormously successful work of art." During the run of the Biennial, he said, several different bands of young, unknown musicians would meet there by arrangement to practice or to play. "It was as selfless as Rirkrit's pieces can be," Ross said, "and at the same time for me it was a real signature work, in the grand tradition that Rirkrit embodies, of art as a servant, an inciting servant and teacher, who provides something very simple and basic."

Rirkrit's career as a teacher had started in 1996, when he was asked to be a visiting artist at Columbia University's School of the Arts. His free-form teaching methods, which usually included treating his students to lunch at a local Thai restaurant, proved to be so effective that he was made an adjunct professor and then, four years ago, an Associate Professor of Professional Practice, a newly created category at Columbia, which amounts to virtually the same thing as tenure. From 1996 on, he also began spending more time in Thailand. He built a new house for his parents, who weren't quite sure what he did. "I think his parents knew he was an artist," Elizabeth Peyton, who went there with him soon after they were married, told me, "but they didn't really understand what that meant. They didn't understand why he lived in New York and not with them."

Peyton says that his going to Thailand also had to do with a feeling that he was misunderstood in New York. "When he was doing the cooking pieces," she said, "people would call up and say, 'I'm having an opening, would you like to be part of the show and cook?' He was really angry over that, really upset. The other thing was that not many people were buying his work." Rirkrit found a Thai mentor, an older artist named Montien Boonma, who was a link between the established school of European-trained, Western-oriented Thai artists and a younger generation that was trying to find its own way. "I was kind of an outsider in Thailand then," Rirkrit remembers. "People didn't believe I was really Thai, and Montien was the one who pulled me back in." He met a number of young Thai artists, and started a visual magazine called *oVER*. In 1998, he and an artist named Kamin Lerdchaiprasert bought a plot of land outside the village of Sanpatong, near Chiang Mai, with the idea of establishing a self-sustaining collective enterprise where artists and local villagers could live and work, growing rice and generating their own electric power and gas for cooking by innovative, environmentally friendly means. "The Land," as they called it, was also to be "an open space to cultivate ideas of social engagement."

When Rirkrit re-created his apartment for the first time, at the Kunstverein, in Cologne, in 1995, he called it "Tomorrow Is Another Day," because that was something Udo Kittleman, the museum's director then, was in the habit of saying. When he did it in New York, at Gavin Brown's Enterprise, in the summer of 1999, it was called "Tomorrow can shut up and go away." That was Brown's contribution, and it reflected the grittier ambience of the New York piece. They couldn't fit the whole apartment into the gallery, so the rooms were smaller and more crowded. And since Gavin Brown's was a gallery, rather than a museum, and Brown had recently opened a bar next door, and the show ran twenty-four hours a day for three weeks, the level of behavior showed fewer constraints. "I met someone who claimed to have had sex there, and another person who said he had group sex there," Jerry Saltz reported in the *Village Voice*. A gay men's magazine did a porno shoot in the space. Fischerspooner, a then unknown art-rock performance group, used it for their first, defining (and deafening) public performance. One or two homeless people moved in. A lot of visitors drew on the walls—some of them well-known artists, like Ashley Bickerton and Ronald Jones. Erik Parker, a young painter who knew Elizabeth Peyton, was recruited to paint a mural on one wall and to keep his eye on the place at night, but his surveillance was less than stringent. He and his future wife conducted their courtship in the bedroom. "There was all this kind of drunkenness and debauchery after 2 A.M.," Parker said. "It was really hot—no air-conditioning. Some guy mouthed off at Chris Ofili one night, and I sprayed him with a fire extinguisher." But nothing really bad happened, amazingly enough. Nobody got hurt, or overdosed on drugs, or raped a nun. "We were lucky," Brown concedes. "The art world is very polite."

A private foundation in Liverpool bought the whole apartment installation from the gallery that year, for an undisclosed amount. These days, Brown is selling more and more of Rirkrit's work,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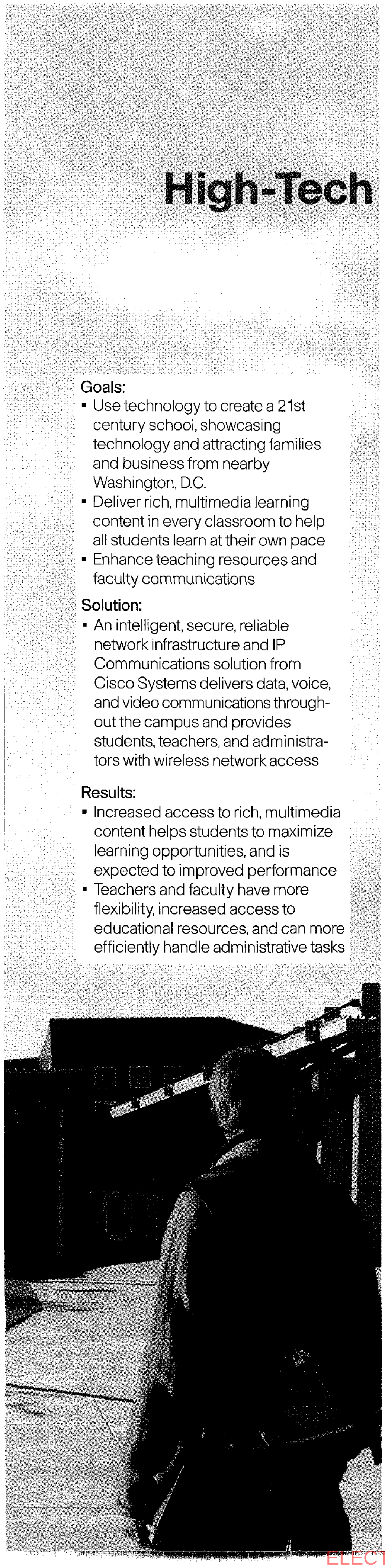

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both early and late. The Guggenheim Museum recently paid three hundred and fifty thousand dollars for his re-creation of the architect Rudolf Schindler's studio in Los Angeles, which Rirkrit had made for a 2002 show at the Secession museum, in Vienna; it was put to use there as a space for concerts, lectures, meetings, and Thai massages, and Rirkrit expects the Guggenheim to find appropriate uses for it on upper Fifth Avenue—psychiatric sessions, maybe.

Inevitably, Rirkrit's laissez-faire, audience-participation approach to art (not to mention his success) has offended certain sectors of the critical establishment. Writing in *Artforum* about the Rotterdam version of Rirkrit's retrospective, where, instead of apartments and broadcast studios, there were only empty galleries and disembodied voices reading from a script over loudspeakers, the critic Sven Lütticken scoffed at an art that "led ever so easily to self-satisfied, self-congratulatory art-world jubilations." In a longer essay in a 2004 issue of *October*, the sacred fount of formalist artspeak, Claire Bishop criticized Rirkrit's lack of political commitment. "Despite Tiravanija's rhetoric of open-endedness and viewer emancipation," she wrote, "the structure of his work circumscribes the outcome in advance, and . . . reduces its scope to the pleasures of a private group who identify with one another as gallery-goers." Rirkrit's colleagues naturally feel that Bishop missed the point of this new kind of work. "If Claire had her way," the artist Liam Gillick said recently, "we'd all know who was good and bad, and nothing would change. Rirkrit comes from a position that the world is changing. A lot of the work he's done—and that others have done—doesn't try to tell you what you already know."

While Rirkrit's work doesn't usually deal directly with political issues, there is a sense in which all of it can be considered political. He is an artist who is constantly changing the rules of the game, and challenging institutions to open up and do things they have never done before. There is also that strain of utopianism in Rirkrit's thinking—playful utopianism, let's say—and in the thinking of Gillick, Pierre Huyghe, Philippe Parreno, and a few others in their loosely associated group. For the 2003 Venice Biennale, the curator Hans-Ulrich Obrist asked Rirkrit and Molly Nesbit, an art historian who teaches at Vassar, to work with him on a project to reconsider the notion of utopia and its possible relevance today. It was Rirkrit (in his alternate role as curator/entrepreneur) who came up with the design of "Utopia Station," a long, walled platform like a railroad waiting room, with doors opening into adjacent exhibition spaces; it became one of the main events at the Biennale. A hundred and fifty artists were invited to do posters for the exhibit, and about forty of them also showed sculptures, paintings, or other objects loosely related to the utopia theme. The result was fairly chaotic, but Rirkrit has said that his idea of utopia is being able to exist in chaos. What Rirkrit deeply mistrusts is the kind of homogenized thinking that he sees in the drive toward globalization in the world today. "I think globalization is the Western world trying to deal with how the rest of the world is catching up to it," he said. "The term is used to give the impression that we are open, when in fact we're just as closed as before, and we're still trying to control how everything works, how everything is made." All the previous dreams of utopia—especially Western ones—have failed, he believes, because they did not give sufficient weight to human differences.

What about art, then? Can art do anything to change society? "Well, I kind of believe it," he said, laughing. "That's one of the reasons art is interesting. I wouldn't say it can change the world, but it can slowly change some minds, or bring people to some thoughts." The other day, I reminded Rirkrit of Duchamp's definition of art, the only one he had ever found to be valid: "Anything that is made by man." Rirkrit laughed, and said that at this point he didn't have a working definition of art. "Maybe at the end of my life I'll say the same as Duchamp," he said. "It's very hard to define now, but I think very much about how I can . . . continue. With me, it is always about a structure for people to use. I don't want to tell people how to use it. But I think there must be something in art that gets you to that point of there being a different reality, of having another kind of experience." ♦

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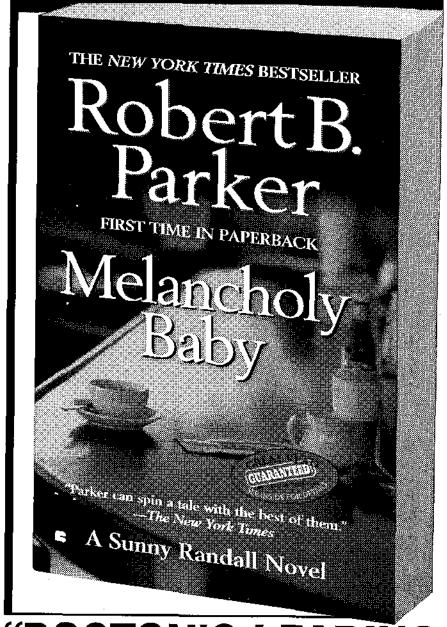
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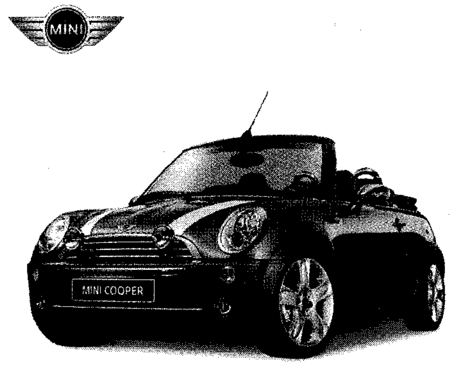

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Jørn Utzon returns to the Sydney Opera House.

BY GERALDINE BROOKS

Fifty years ago, the state government of New South Wales, in Australia, announced a competition for the design of an opera house to occupy a sandstone headland in Sydney Harbour. Two hundred and thirty-three entries were submitted, of which the most arresting was by a little-known thirty-eight-year-old architect from Denmark. Jørn Utzon worked out of a studio near a house he had designed for his young family in the small seaside township of Hellebæk. He had won several competitions but had built nothing larger than a pair of modest housing projects. The son of a naval architect, he studied the Sydney site from nautical charts purchased at a marine bookstore in Copenhagen, to get a feel for the action of winds and tides against the landform.

His design evoked sails, shells, and gull wings. Alone among the entrants, Utzon had recognized that the building would be seen from all perspectives; when looked down upon from the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the buildings nearby, it would have, in effect, a "fifth façade." Eero Saarinen, the most distinguished of the competition judges, called the design "a work of genius." Utzon had disregarded competition rules, using gold on drawings that were supposed to be black and white, and neglecting to include a required perspective of the building in its harbor setting. Saarinen himself took up pastels and completed two large sketches to fill the gap. In the end, the judges' decision was unanimous, and Utzon began work on one of the most famous architectural designs of the twentieth century. The architect Louis I. Kahn remarked, "The sun did not know how beautiful its light was until it was reflected off this building."

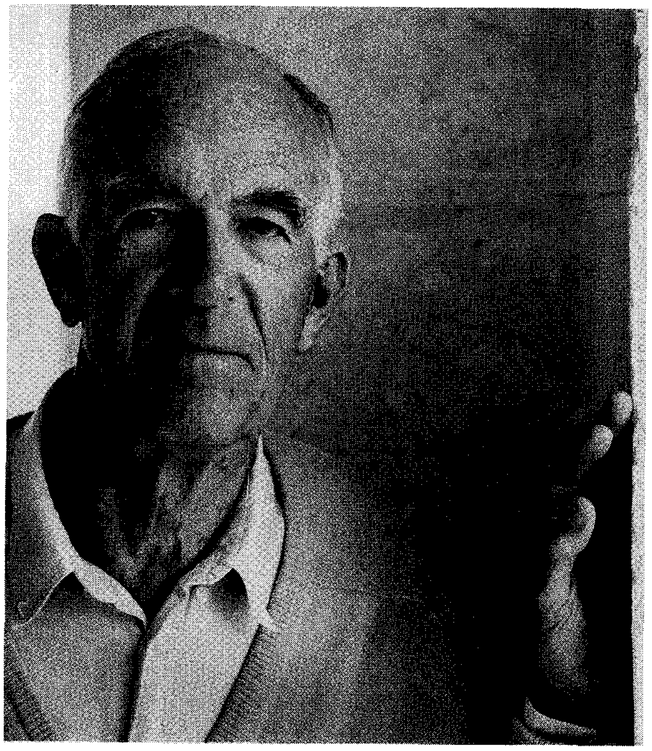
Yet the Sydney Opera House, instead of making Utzon's career, almost ruined it. After he had worked for a decade and settled his family in Australia, conflict with the state government of New South Wales forced him to leave, with the project only two-thirds finished. The building was completed without regard for his intentions. Utzon went back to Denmark with his reputation tarnished. He became reclusive, declining to speak about his work. When the Opera House finally opened, in 1973, he refused an invitation to the ceremony. He has never returned to Sydney.

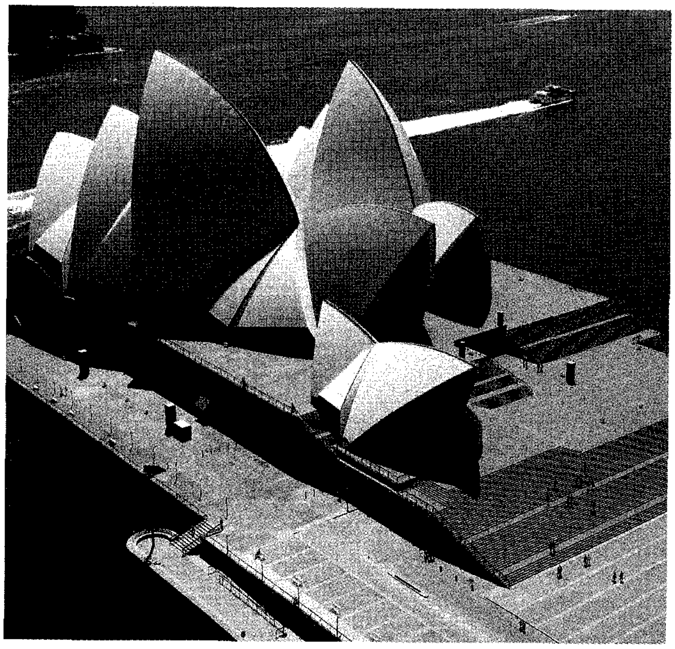
Last year, however, without fanfare a sign went up over construction scaffolding on the Opera House site. It read:

WESTERN LOGGIA PROJECT
ARCHITECT JØRN UTZON

Rifts between architects and their clients are commonplace. Reconciliation is rare. But, thanks to the building's need for a refurbishment and to intense lobbying by a group of dedicated supporters, Utzon, at the age of eighty-seven, is bringing his vision to bear on elements of the design that were changed or spoiled after he left.

Throughout the long estrangement, Utzon has said, he never stopped thinking about the Opera House for a single day: "I have the building in my head like a composer has his symphony." He has already remodelled the interior of one small reception room. Construction has started on revision of the building's foyers and on its loggia. Behind high hoardings, construction workers are punching large holes through the granite-faced podium walls, to bring light and views of the harbor into the previously dingy drama-theatre foyers. Utzon is also redesigning the interior of one of the two main halls, and has completed a set of design principles that will guide future alterations, long after he is gone, to an edifice likely to stand for centuries. Perhaps for the first time in history, an architect is designing spaces he will never see for a building in which he has never set foot.





Utzon in 2001: His work for the Opera House was one of the most famous architectural designs of the twentieth century, but he was taken off the project long before the building's completion.

OLE HAUPT; DAVID MESSENT/COURTESY EDITION BLØNDAL

Utzon is elusive. For decades, he has relied on his family to protect him from unwanted intrusions. His two sons, Jan and Kim, are architects. His daughter, Lin, is a ceramic and textile artist. All have collaborated with their father on projects and served as his public face. Those who knew the family made it clear to me that a meeting with Jørn Utzon was unlikely under any circumstances, and impossible without his children's approval. So I found myself, last winter, waiting to meet Lin Utzon under blossoming almond trees on the Spanish island of Majorca. Jørn Utzon and his wife, Lis, lived here from the nineteen-seventies until they returned to Denmark a couple of years ago. Behind me, the ruins of a Moorish fortress hugged a distant clifftop. I knew that somewhere just below, and echoing the lines of the ruin, was Can Feliz, one of two houses that Utzon had designed here. His daughter lives there now.

"You won't be able to find it," Lin told me when I phoned her from Sydney. "We will come down to the main road to get you." She was right: Can Feliz comes into view only partially, at the end of a series of rising twists and turns past fields and clumps of pine trees—the perfect retreat for an obsessively private man. The house is modest in size but feels spacious; in the living room, two simple stone columns frame a panorama of woods and fields falling away to the distant ocean. A pair of Australian wattle trees were in bloom, golden against the softer gold of the local stone from which the house is built. "My parents loved the wattles in Sydney," Lin said. "We all adored Australia. It was a huge influence on all our lives." It was Lin, then aged ten, who took a phone call informing her father that he had won the Opera House competition, in 1957. Her parents were out, walking to the post office. She cycled after them, calling out the good news.

In many ways, Australia suited Utzon. He had grown up by water and woods, sailing and hunting with his father, who managed the shipyard at Ålborg, a port town in the north of Denmark. Aage Utzon was famous for designing fast yachts with pointed sterns, which, he said, were inspired by the study of fish. He taught his son how to use nature for inspiration and how to build models to test his ideas. In 1930, Aage took the family to the Stockholm Exhibition of modern design, and Jørn, then twelve, later recalled how this exposure to Functionalism changed his life: "My parents returned home completely carried away by the new ideas and thoughts. They soon commenced redoing our home. The concept was space and light. All of the heavy, unpractical furniture was moved out and simple things were brought in."

Utzon was an indifferent student at school and barely scraped into the architecture course at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. Once there, he thrived. His draftsmanship was excellent—both in the exacting technical drawings he had learned from his father and in his own distinctive, loose sketches in soft charcoal. He enjoyed the school's requirement that students spend eight months working in building trades. In the academy's library, he came across an illustrated Sung-dynasty building manual (its title, "Ying Tsao Fa Shi," simply means "Building Standards") which became a crucial influence on his design philosophy. The nine-hundred-year-old text showed how a limited set of elements could serve to build any structure, from a hut to a palace. This idea became so important to Utzon that when he later went to China he acquired his own copy of the rare, string-bound manual to take with him to Sydney. By then, Utzon's cultural eclecticism had become a major part of his sensibility. In the late nineteen-forties, he made several important trips: one to Morocco, where he was captivated by the mud-brick strongholds and courtyard houses of the Berbers; and another to Mexico, where he saw the platform temples of the Yucatán, whose huge, stepped approaches were to become a dominant idea in his designs.

On his return to Denmark, he built a prototype for a low-cost, courtyard-house. He developed his design by thinking about the various people who might inhabit such housing. He imagined families in detail, almost writing short stories about them—some who used their courtyards for beekeeping or boat building, some who were large and messy, others who were private and austere. Utzon's design, based on an embracing pair of L shapes, was flexible enough to accommodate them all. The most important thing was "that you are able to imagine a life lived by people before you begin to design the house," he explained in a taped letter to a group of architecture students. "In that way you can slowly form an idea of a room."

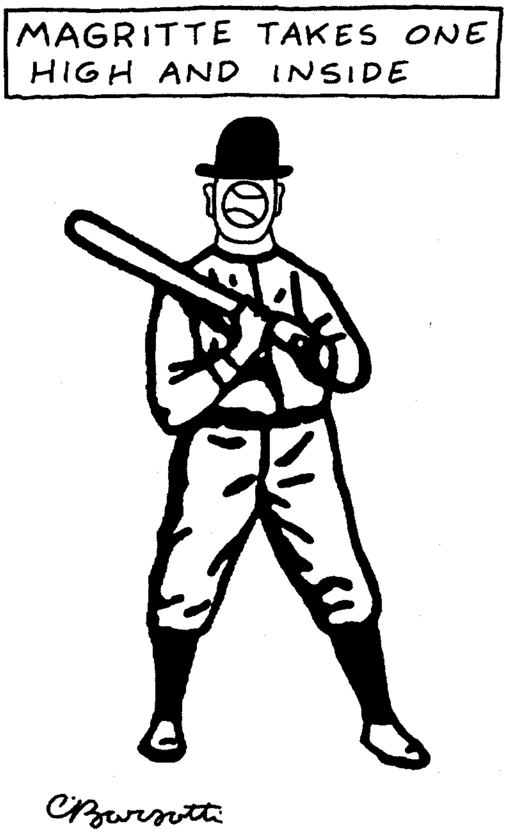
When Utzon entered the Opera House competition, he went sailing around Hamlet's castle, Kronborg, at Elsinore, which seems to float upon a promontory similar to the Opera House site. He came up with the idea of a massive podium that would form the base of the building, echoing Sydney's sandstone headlands while cunningly accommodating all the backstage operations. Soaring above this would be two performance halls. As with the courtyard house, he vividly imagined the way people would use and inhabit the spaces. "The audience is assembled from cars, trains and ferries and led like a festive procession into the respective halls," he wrote in his competition entry. In an article written in 1965, he compared the effect he sought to that of a Gothic church: "You never finish with it while you move around it or see it against the sky. This interplay with the sun, the light, the clouds is so important that it makes the building into a living thing."

Now that the city of Sydney is instantly identified by the Opera House, it is hard to imagine the place as it was in the nineteen-fifties. I grew up there and can just recall the harbor of my early childhood, its sparkle often shrouded by the belching of ill-sited plants, its downtown foreshore cluttered with boxy, unimaginative office buildings. The mood of the time was conservative: Sydney seemed an unlikely city to embrace a radical and extravagant architectural experiment, especially one dedicated to the arts. Australians were slowly shrugging off an inferiority complex, dubbed the "cultural cringe," which was a residue of the country's penal-settlement origins and its recent status as an outpost of the British Empire. Sport ruled, and at least four of the building's future tenants—Opera Australia, the Australian Ballet Company, the Sydney Dance Company, and the Sydney Theatre Company—didn't yet exist.

But change was coming, driven in part by postwar immigration from Europe that had suddenly swollen Sydney's population. The newcomers scrambled to find housing. "We were a family of four crammed into a one-bedroom flat, and we rented out the bedroom," recalls Joseph Skrzynski, who until recently was the chairman of the Sydney Opera House Trust and a principal figure in effecting the reconciliation with Utzon. Skrzynski, the son of an aristocratic Polish landowner, cavalry officer, and concentration-camp survivor, arrived with his family in 1950.

The cultural expectations of such immigrants expanded the audience for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, which had hundreds on a waiting list for seats in the city's cramped Town Hall. Its conductor, Eugene Goossens, approached the state premier with the suggestion that Sydney build a venue expressly for music. Unexpectedly, the premier, Joe Cahill, a Labor Party politician and former railway worker, agreed. Cahill's own tastes in entertainment ran to works such as the Donkey Serenade and the Lux Radio Theatre, but he advocated so tenaciously for the Opera House that it became known as the Taj Cahill. In forcing the project through a reluctant Cabinet, he vastly understated its likely cost, which eventually grew to ten times his estimate. By insisting that work commence on the building even before Utzon had resolved key design elements, Cahill gave the project a momentum that proved irreversible.

But Cahill's enthusiasm for the project also contributed to a series of construction delays for which Utzon was blamed. The premature start meant, for instance, that piers needed to support the roof were sunk in place before the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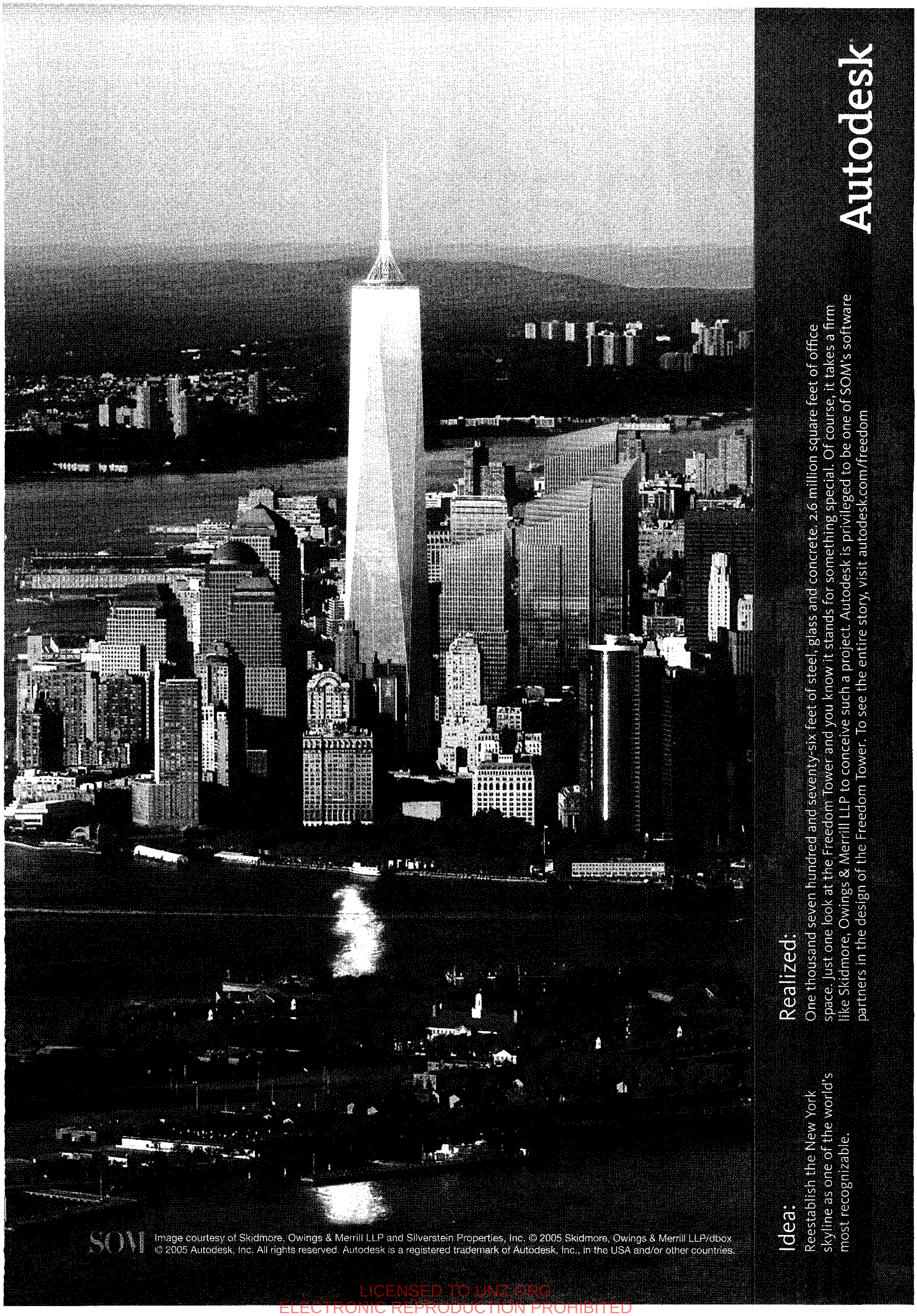

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roof design was resolved. Utzon had drawn free-form sculptural shapes that the project engineers, Ove Arup & Partners, struggled in vain to convert into buildable solutions. Utzon, still living in Denmark, prowled his father's shipyard. He thought about a saying of his father's: "Here in the dockyard you construct and produce what you can't buy, what is not to be had, what is necessary." The large curves of the hulls gave him an idea: all of the Opera House's roof shells could be generated from a single sphere. The solution was not only buildable; it allowed complex elements to be prefabricated using a small number of simple forms, as in his beloved Sung-dynasty manual. Excited, he returned to his studio and explained the idea to an assistant by cutting all the necessary shell-shaped segments from the skin of a single orange. However, the impact of the new design on the Sydney site was rather less elegant: the piers weren't in the right places to bear the loads imposed by the new geometry. For several days, downtown Sydney shook from the explosions as the piers were blasted out and redone.

In 1963, as work on the site accelerated, Utzon moved to Australia with his wife and three children. Shunning the society of the local élite, the Utzons bought a large tract of gum-tree-shaded land an hour north of the city, between a wide ocean beach and a tranquil harbor, where their neighbors were boat builders and beachcombing bohemians. Utzon set up a studio in a nearby boat shed and hired a number of bright young Australian architects, who became, in effect, disciples. One of them, Peter Myers, recalled being on-site when the plywood forms were removed from the concrete beams that arc up on either side of the northern foyers like the ribs of a fan. "The concrete was perfect, the edges were pure, there wasn't a blemish," Myers said. He turned to see tears running down Utzon's face. "And then I saw that the tough Italian workers were crying, too. Their pride in workmanship was being acknowledged, and we were all transported by what had been achieved."

Myers says that Utzon treated his young staff as "colleagues, not assistants," and recalls gathering at the family's beach house for sunset picnics or

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impromptu boating expeditions. The accoutrements of the Utzons' European life—a sleek Citroën car, a piano built of chrome and Perspex—left a lasting impression on them. Utzon always dressed with subtle taste—"It was clear he had a very good tailor in Copenhagen"—but the younger architects were free to abandon the suit and tie that would have been obligatory in most Sydney architecture firms of the day. Myers says that Utzon's perfectionism and his refusal to be rushed into anything were summed up in an anecdote—"I must have heard him tell it fifteen times"—about the Danish furniture designer Kaare Klint. "Someone comes to Klint's studio and asks him, 'What are you working on?' Klint replies, 'I'm working on a chair.' Eighteen months later, the same man visits and again asks Klint what he is working on. 'I told you,' Klint says, 'I'm working on a chair.' "

The roof tiles of the Sydney Opera House were Utzon's version of the chair. He liked to say that almost everything about the building's design was "on the edge of the possible," and for the tiles he wanted something very specific: a tile that "had gloss but did not have a mirror effect. A tile with a coarse structure that resembled hammered silver." He did not want a blinding flare off the roof surfaces, or a "normal" glaze, which looks "as if it is made from white cardboard." He used many metaphors for what he was seeking. The tiles, he said, should contrast matte against sheen, like a fresh layer of snow on a frozen snowbank, or the shine of a fingernail against skin. "The material," he wrote, "would have to be sought in the building of the ancient world, which has stood up to many years' use without deterioration." He travelled to China and Japan, looking at samples of ancient roof tiles and half-glazed ware. In an archive of his papers kept in a Sydney library, images of the tiled dome of the Great Mosque at Esfahan, in Iran, are filed alongside a more contemporary inspiration: an advertising photograph of a Swedish swimsuit model, the chevron pattern of her costume flowing easily over her curves. The Opera House tiles, Utzon decided, would be laid in chevrons, fanning out across the roof curves to express the form of the concrete beams beneath.

The Opera House tiles would need

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to stand up to extreme conditions, and, to develop them, Utzon chose a Swedish ceramic factory, Höganäs, which normally produced a far less glamorous product: stoneware tiles to line the sluices in paper mills, which are alternately exposed to boiling water and ice-cold river water. After many trials, Utzon settled on a tile made of the smooth local clay mixed with grainy, crushed matter to add texture. The raw tile was painted with a sauce or slick of the same material, fired, then overlaid with a transparent glaze before a final firing. Fixing more than a million tiles on steep surfaces hundreds of feet in the air posed immense difficulties, so the tiles were laid on the ground, where quality could be controlled, in chevron-shaped "lids," which were then hoisted into place. To allow for variations in stress, the spaces between the tiles in each section had to be calculated by computer, at that time a novelty in building projects.

Developing the tiles and the method for laying them took more than three years. While Utzon was out of Australia making his studies, the engineers and others on-site grew frustrated. Communications between Europe and Australia were difficult in those days—calls had to be booked through an operator a day in advance—and sometimes Utzon couldn't be reached for consultations. Premier Cahill had died suddenly in 1959, leaving Utzon without his chief political backer. In the 1965 elections, the costs and delays of Utzon's project were a campaign issue, and the more conservative Liberal Party, which claimed that the project had got out of hand, won power. Utzon found himself reporting to Davis Hughes, a rural politician whose country constituents were unsympathetic to the extravagant urban edifice. As Minister for Public Works, Hughes "was champing at the bit to shut [Utzon] down," Joseph Skrzynski recalls.

By then, the podium was complete and the roof shells were rising, rib by rib. Utzon had turned to the design of the theatre interiors, marrying the needs of staging and acoustics with the requirement to fit in the maximum number of seats. His vision was to have a sudden shift of mood from the processional approach to the theatres to a performance space that glittered with festive promise. Utzon admired the rich colors of Noh and Kabuki theatre and the gilded spaces of some traditional European theatres, but inspiration also came from the bushland near his studio. Richard Leplastrier, one of his young assistants, recalled walking with Utzon through the bush—he had, he says, a hunter's "long, easy lope"—when they heard the cry of a neighbor's peacock. "Color, Ricardo!" Utzon exclaimed. "If you really want to understand color, we must do studies of the birds!"

The effect Utzon wanted was "a climax in color" that would "uplift you in that festive mood, away from daily life, that you expect when you go to the theatre." He was experimenting with intense, Sung-dynasty reds and shimmering gold leaf in one hall; peacock emeralds and blues highlighted with silver in the other. The halls would stand out "like a big exotic bird." Each hall would have an elaborately curvaceous, acoustically ingenious plywood ceiling—"hanging like a cloud in the sky." Utzon likened the way that the rippling ceiling would fit inside the curves of the outer roof to a walnut—the smooth outer shell containing the folded forms of the meat nestled within. Richard Johnson, the Sydney architect now collaborating with Utzon, has another explanation: "The auditorium is the musical instrument; the shell is the case."

Utzon was working, as was his style, with a single supplier, a Sydney plywood manufacturer named Ralph Symonds, who shared his willingness to experiment almost endlessly. Hughes, however, felt that the time for experiments was past, and wanted drawings that could be put to competitive bidding. His view was a reasonable one in the context of any standard public building project. Utzon, however, maintained that drawings couldn't be done until prototypes had been tested, and asserted scornfully that there was no point in putting the job to tender, as only Symonds had a factory equipped to make the vast plywood sheets required. "He wanted the best possible idea," Skrzynski recalls, whereas Hughes "wanted the best idea you can have by Friday."

Determined to force Utzon to comply, Hughes withheld the fees from which the architect paid his staff. By February, 1966, Utzon faced a cash cri-

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sis. He warned that if the money wasn't paid he would have no alternative but to close his office and leave the project. Given its complexity and the advanced stage of construction, Utzon was confident that Hughes couldn't let him go. He miscalculated. Hughes interpreted the move as Utzon's resignation, and announced it to the press.

Thousands, including many of Australia's most noted artists and writers, rallied in support of Utzon. Martin Sharp, an iconoclastic Sydney painter, created cartoons lampooning Hughes. In one, the minister delivers a stream-of-consciousness rant against Utzon: "Brilliant move forcing that Danish prima donna to resign, he'd want to sing his own bloody operas if we'd let him stay." But the conservative Royal Australian Institute of Architects refused to call for a boycott, and Hughes was able to hand the design to a team of architects who worked directly under his control. The brief for the building was revised, discarding the idea of having the large hall serve both opera and concerts, making it a concert hall only. Opera was shoehorned into the smaller second hall that had been intended for drama, and the drama theatre was crammed into the podium, which had been intended to house only backstage operations. Millions of dollars' worth of specially designed stage equipment had to be scrapped. The contractor charged with that task likened it to "cutting up a live deer."

Utzon gathered his family and left for Denmark, travelling secretly to avoid the press. He journeyed via Mexico, and sent an insouciant postcard to one of his supporters in Sydney: "Went to Yucatán. The ruins are wonderful so why worry? Sydney Opera House becomes a ruin one day." Utzon still believed that the architects Hughes had appointed would stumble, and that he would be recalled. He was right only on the first count. His replacement was Peter Hall, a thirty-five-year-old architect who had already been working for Hughes's department. Hall was a talented designer in the Brutalist mainstream, which made him a disastrous choice for picking up the threads of Utzon's work. He struggled to fathom Utzon's style, which was, in the end, not so

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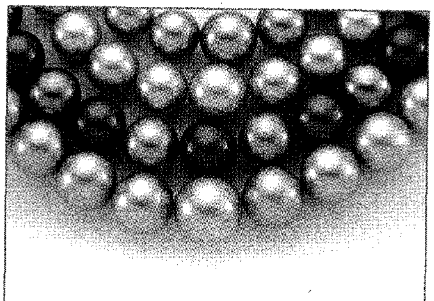

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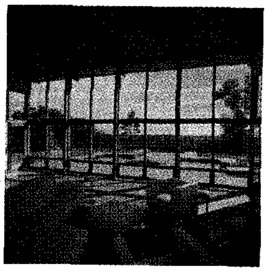

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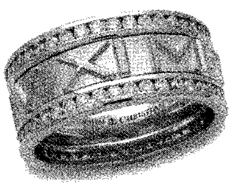

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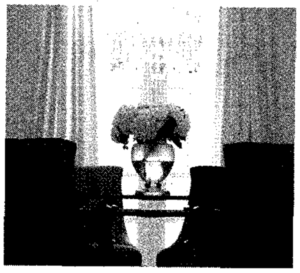

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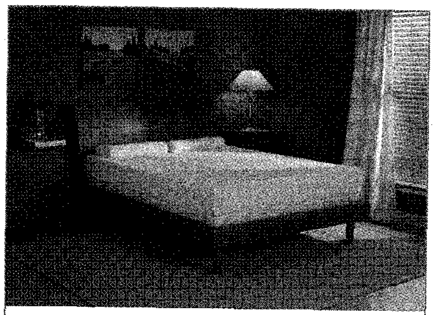

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much a style as a manner of working: understanding the site, drawing ideas from nature and ancient buildings, then synthesizing forms that emphasized human comfort and delight. As Richard Weston, the author of the definitive book on Utzon, puts it, "A Gehry building depends on the taste of Gehry, while with Utzon's, it is as if the site is fulfilling its destiny, as if some other hand had made it."

Costs soared as Hall struggled to find solutions for the interiors. The concert hall became a pedestrian, Lincoln Center-style venue, the opera theatre an aesthetic and practical disaster. Instead of the festive climax Utzon had envisioned, its walls are a stark and forbidding black, with tiers of boxes in Brutalist concrete, many of which have limited sight lines. The acoustics in the cramped orchestra pit are so bad that musicians risk going deaf if they play there for an extended period. After the Opera House, Hall's practice didn't thrive. He died, alcoholic and beset by debts, in 1995.

Utzon, meanwhile, had found his reception back in Denmark distinctly chilly. The president of the Danish Association of Architects told him that, having abandoned one job, he couldn't expect to get work from the government there, and he never did. His one really significant Danish commission came in 1969 from a church congregation in a Copenhagen suburb, and for once Utzon had a client willing to trust him on all details. The site is an unprepossessing strip of busy highway, so Utzon has created his own topography within. The building has few external windows but is saturated with light that falls from skylights set in a remarkable surging ceiling that rises like a wave.

After Sydney, Utzon worked on only one commission of a scale similar to that of the Opera House. In 1971, he designed the Kuwait National Assembly, on a site on the Persian Gulf. The design incorporated many ideas from Arab and Islamic tradition: a vast concrete form that swoops upward from the entrance, recalling the billowing tents of the Bedouin, and providing a *majlis*, or meeting place, where the emir can receive his subjects. Offices and departments are arranged along an internal "street," evoking a souk, or bazaar. Along with early drawings, Utzon sent his assistant a picture of the Esfahan mosque, torn from a newspaper, with the words "arches as beautiful as these" scribbled on it.

But the Assembly project, too, was bedevilled by politics. The emir's commitment to democracy proved weak, and the parliament that the building was meant to house was suspended for several years. Delays and revisions of the brief meant that the Assembly, as built, was a lesser building than Utzon had designed. When, in 1991, the departing Iraqi Army torched it, the interior was refurbished in a glitzy, Louis Farouk style that was the diametric opposite of Utzon's clean, restrained original.

Bad luck dogged other projects. "It was like a curse that followed him," Skrzynski said. A theatre that Utzon had devoted eight years to designing for Zurich was scrapped in a government cost-cutting campaign; another, in Lebanon, was cancelled when civil war broke out. An industrialist who had proposed a project in Portugal was killed in a car crash. No further grand commissions were forthcoming, and some years there was no work at all.

"That is how he came to build this house," Lin, Utzon's daughter, told me at Can Feliz, as she served tea in indigo-splashed porcelain cups of her own design. After the collapse of the Zurich theatre scheme, Utzon's wife suggested building the house. "He needed very much to have a project," Lin told me, as we walked across fields to one of the few vantage points from which the house reveals itself. "They came up here for many, many months, just with a chair each, and they would move around, sitting here and there, studying the different views, the play of light in different seasons, the strength and direction of the prevailing wind." Utzon designed the house almost without plans, working instead with models and in close collaboration with local craftsmen, as he had tried to do with the Opera House. On the days he arrived carrying bottles of wine, the stonemasons knew he'd had a new idea over-

ANOTHER WORLD

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to learn and eager to please. Help me unite . . .
I love my wife, but feel she is in another world.
And I, too, of course, dream of another world. Or bro.

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Or the ropes. Or the map. I am a tyro, I know,
and a stranger, really, to my own self or any other soul . . . .

And yet I do not want to be anonymous. Or still less only
to party. No, what I'll want, as soon as it is night, is to count
the stars on our path as, side by side, whatever the future to share,

we let our steps follow one another on through the dawn.

—*Robert Mazzocco*

night, and that some part of the building would have to be redone.

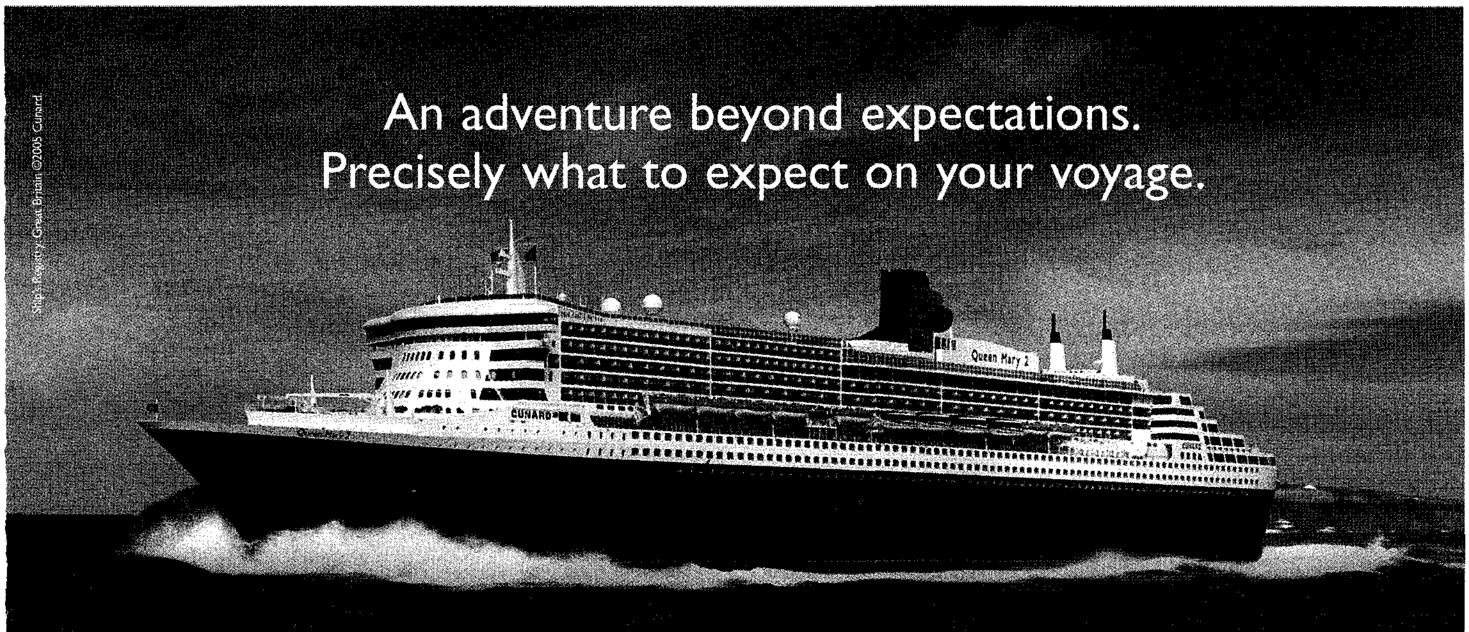
Can Feliz was the second of the two houses he built in Majorca. The first, Can Lis, named for his wife, is a series of small, connected pavilions perched on a coastal clifftop, and later that afternoon Lin took me to see it. In the main pavilion, there is a semicircular stone bench, softened with large linen pillows, curving toward the sea. Instead of capitalizing on the sea view with a large wall of glass, the obvious solution, Utzon has designed deep, slightly angled stone niches, each framing its own view of the sea. These reduce heat and glare in the manner of traditional Mediterranean homes, but also dramatize the play of light and shadow across the stone. The view becomes a sort of serial, as each opening draws the eye in turn. A boat was moving across the horizon as we stood there. It appeared, then vanished, then returned, each time as a kind of surprising apparition, worthy of renewed interest.

Of all the family, Lin retained the strongest ties with Sydney. She kept in touch with her Australian friends, and eventually married one of them. The marriage ended, but Lin visited Sydney frequently, taking her two children to see their father, and she knew how the city had embraced the Opera House. Despite the flaws of the theatre interiors, the building was an immensely successful and popular venue. It had also become a source of civic and even national pride, and was the focus of most significant Australian public celebrations.

It was on one of Lin's visits to Sydney, in 1998, that the idea of asking Utzon to return to work on the Opera House was first broached. She met with Joseph Skrzynski, who had become the chairman of the Sydney Opera House Trust two years earlier, and he mentioned his concern that, as the building aged, refurbishments were being made on an ad-hoc basis. He wondered what Utzon would do, given the opportunity to revisit his design with all the technological advances of the last three decades at his disposal. He explained to Lin that he was afraid that calls to list the building as a World Heritage site might lead to its being preserved with all the mutilations to its original design locked in place forever.

At first, Lin was hesitant, unwilling to expose her father to further disappointment, but Skrzynski won her trust. Skrzynski, believing that the proposal should come from a fellow-architect, commissioned Richard Johnson, an award-winning Sydney designer, who had got his attention in 1998 during a meeting to discuss the conservation of the building. Johnson had taken the proposed master plan and thrown it on the floor. Johnson recalls, "I said, 'The architect is still alive. The most "conservative" thing is to go back and reinforce his ideas.' "

On a misty day in 1999, however, when Johnson found himself being driven by Utzon up the winding road to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Can Feliz, his bravado deserted him. "I thought, How the hell did I get myself into this mess? I was afraid of opening old wounds." Utzon was, he said, "charming, interesting, all the rest of it," but, after a day of talking, his answer was no. Johnson called Skrzynski from his hotel and said, "Sorry, Joe. I've blown it." On the second day, he met Utzon again. They talked about music, landscape, happenings in Sydney, uses of the building, but the negative response still hung in the air between them. On the third and last day, they met, Johnson was convinced, just to say farewell. "I thought I was going to get the elegant brushoff," Johnson said. But when that didn't come Johnson says he decided to risk being direct: "I said, 'We have no right to ask any more of you. But there are now many experts on the Sydney Opera House, and you are not one of them. But if you write down the design principles, then *you* are the authority.'"

Utzon agreed, asking that his son Jan travel to Sydney on his behalf to work with Johnson. "I grew up with this building," Jan Utzon told me. He had started his architectural studies in Sydney and was often on-site between classes, talking with the architects and tradesmen who worked with his father. Even after the family returned to Denmark, the Opera House remained part of Jan's life. "There was barely a day when it wasn't discussed," he told me. After thirty years' experience working on his father's projects, Jan is adept at translating his father's ideas and sketches into detailed drawings.

Utzon's judgment is sought on details large and small. Samples of finishes and materials are sent to Denmark for his consideration. For the recently remodelled reception-hall floor, he chose Australian southern blue gum, and instructed that it be finished unconventionally, rubbed with soap flakes to give it a soft sheen.

Skrzynski fielded only one negative reaction to the news of Utzon's return. A gravel-voiced Davis Hughes, who has since died, called from his retirement home and delivered a forty-five-minute harangue, saying that Utzon had been incapable of finishing the Opera House the first time and shouldn't be offered a second chance to waste public funds. He told Skrzynski, "I did Utzon a favor. I put him out of his misery like you put down a dog."

I spoke with Jan not long after he had returned from supervising the concrete work for the drama theatre loggia, the first structural change to the building's exterior since its completion. The loggia is a crisp march of square white columns, forty-five metres long. Twenty foundation piers have been sunk into the sea beneath the columns. Behind the colonnade, nine large new windows and a doorway have been knocked into the very thick wall of the podium, framing views across the water to the Harbour Bridge. When completed, more than fifty per cent of the once-claustrophobic western foyer wall will be glass. "We understand that it's an ongoing process," Jan said of the work on the building. "It might take thirty or even sixty years to get to the desired result." Joe Skrzynski spelled it out more plainly: "We have five million to spend on the design work while Utzon is around—we've got that approved—to warehouse his intellect, his thinking."

In 2003, in a decision prompted, in part, by the reconciliation, Utzon was awarded the Pritzker Prize, architecture's highest accolade. The reconciliation, Lin says, has marked the beginning of "a happy period for my parents, and for all of us." Her father "is at peace, working again on his ideas."

As the light gradually retreated beyond Can Feliz's large windows, Lin considered my request to meet her father. He had recently coöperated in the publication of a book on his work, something he had always declined to do before, and he had opened his personal archives for a series of shorter books, each of which presents a detailed study of one of his projects. The arrival of these authoritative publications means that Utzon's work can finally be properly studied by architects and students. Lin thought that he seemed more inclined to talk about his work. "I'll phone him," she said. I sat with her husband, the artist and writer Hugues de Montalembert, while a very long conversation in Danish emanated from the next room.

When Lin finally rejoined us, her face was glum. "He said no."

"He always says no the first time you propose something," Hugues pointed out.

"I have an idea," Lin said, disappear-

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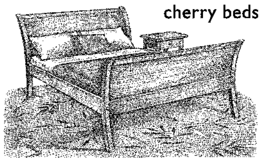

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ing into the courtyard. A few moments later, she returned, her arms laden with almond blossoms, lemon boughs, and wattle flowers—all from trees planted by her parents. "Take these to him, with my best love," she said, handing me his closely guarded address. I glanced down at the paper. Utzon had the perfect address for a brooding Dane: he lived in Elsinore.

A day and a half later, I found myself clutching a bag of wilting Majorcan foliage, shivering on the doorstep of a simple Danish row house at the edge of a winter-stripped beech forest. Lin had told me the best time to call on her parents, and there was a car parked in the driveway, but no one answered my knock. I sat down on the frozen stoop, feeling rather foolish and wondering if the recluse was inside, waiting for me to give up and go away. After a while, a taxi pulled up. Two figures emerged, a fair-skinned woman and a tall, slightly stooped man, his skin, always deeply tanned in the photographs from his years in Australia, slightly mottled from the effects of a life lived as much as possible outdoors.

If the Utzons were irritated by the sight of an unwanted visitor, they were too polite to show it. Lis, smiling at her daughter's stratagem, buried her face in the fragrant blossoms. Jørn shrugged off his overcoat, revealing a pale-yellow cashmere sweater, and offered me a glass of wine.

The Utzons' home now is a small, light-filled space that demands much less of them than the stone masterpieces in Majorca. Yet every inch of it bears witness to Utzon's past or present work. A spherical model demonstrating the Opera House's roof geometry is fixed to the wall above the kitchen table. The bookshelves are filled with works that have inspired him: the Sung-dynasty building manual, books of nature photography, a monograph featuring the mosque in Esfahan. Behind the sofa is a large cartoon for a tapestry that Utzon designed for the new interior of the Opera House reception hall. In 2001, he showed this cartoon to Richard Johnson, saying, "I have dared to make a tapestry." The design is inspired by a piece of music by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, and has bright patches of color repre-

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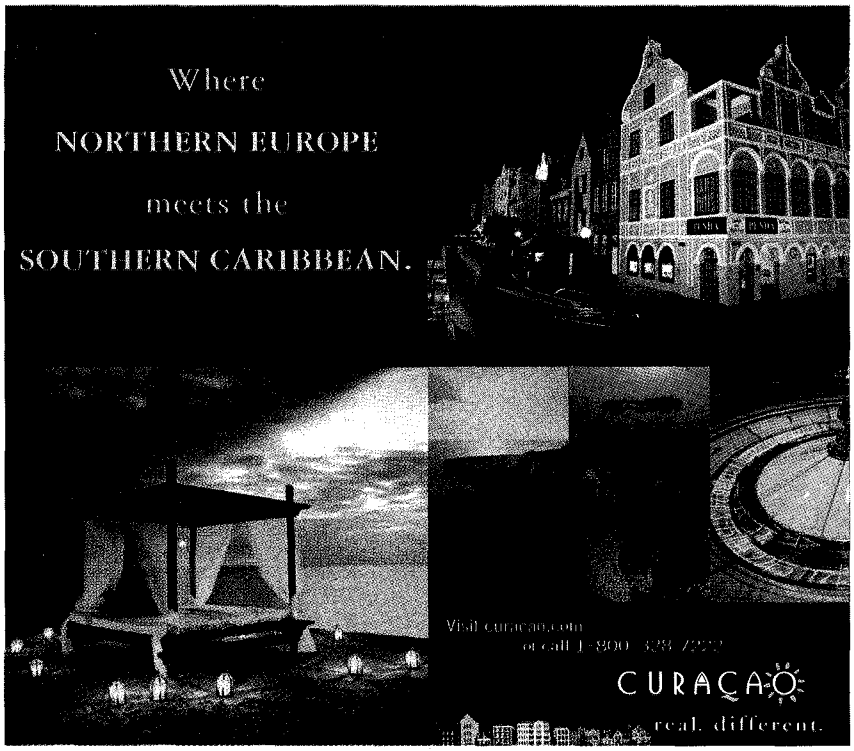

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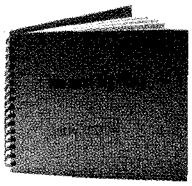

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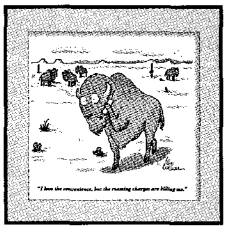

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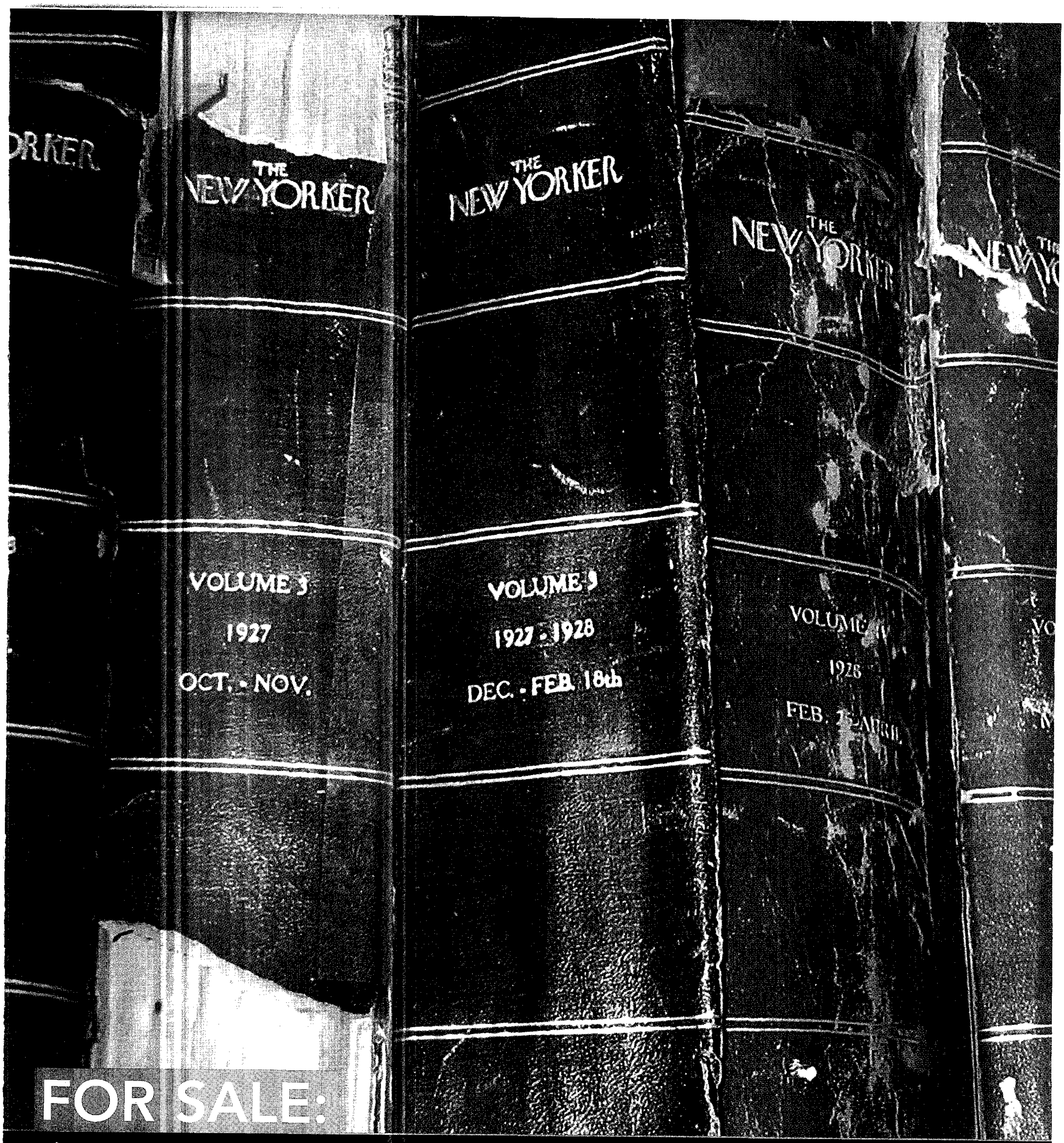
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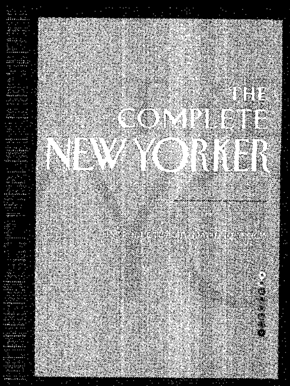
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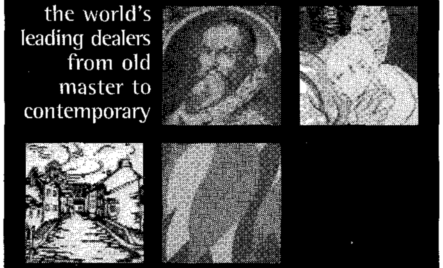

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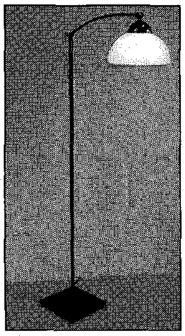

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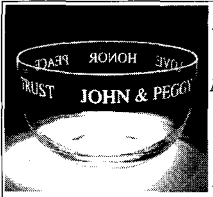

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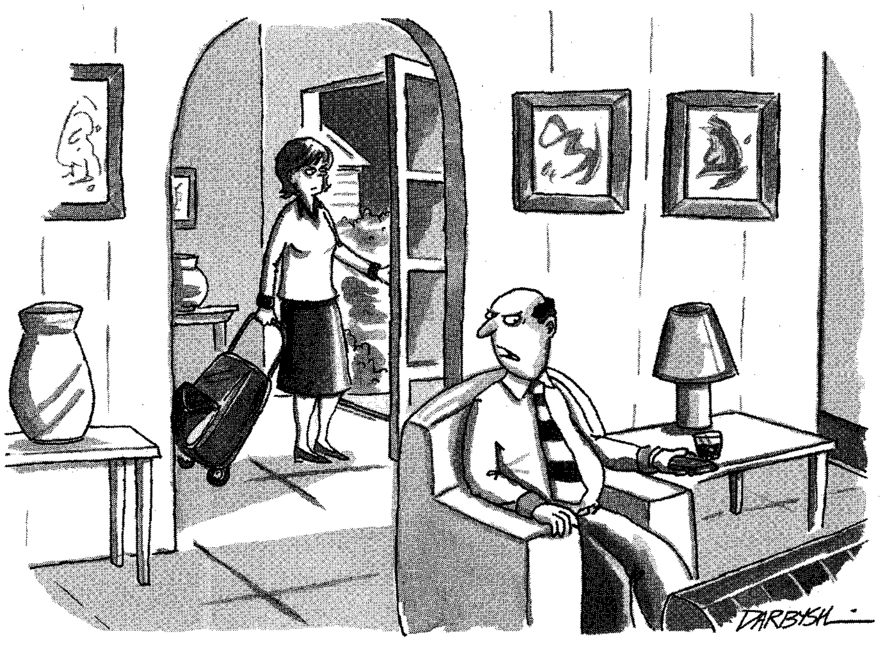
senting the musical pitches and long dark slashes suggesting the rhythm. Utzon wanted a splash of gold to evoke an explosion of violins. Johnson, who was with Utzon when the tapestry-makers presented their samples of wool, watched him reject twelve different types of gold thread. "He'd say, 'No, none of that, brighter.' " He eventually rejected more than fifty samples before settling on an almost tinselly fibre. "The weavers couldn't believe he would possibly want anything as vulgar as that," Johnson said. At this early stage of Utzon's reëngagement, there were doubts and whispers: Did the great man still have his stuff? But as soon as Utzon's chosen thread was woven against the subtle creams and gentle greens, Johnson saw how the patch of sparkle would reiterate the glinting lights from the harbor, seen through large windows opposite. The tapestry, fourteen metres long, now hangs in the chamber that has been renamed the Utzon Room.

Utzon's new plans for the redesigned interior of the opera hall have not yet been publicly released. At first, he said, he had opposed a major redesign along the lines of his original. "It seems that most people love the building, and it is very difficult to imagine everything being changed, that the building should be closed down for a number of years." He also felt that it "would not be correct to go back to the thoughts and ideas that were new in the early nineteen-sixties" and were based on different uses for the halls. Johnson recalls once becoming so upset while discussing the flaws in the opera theatre that he had to stop talking. Utzon regarded him calmly and said, "You know, it's like gardening. Every garden has a few weeds in it. That shouldn't stop you enjoying the garden."

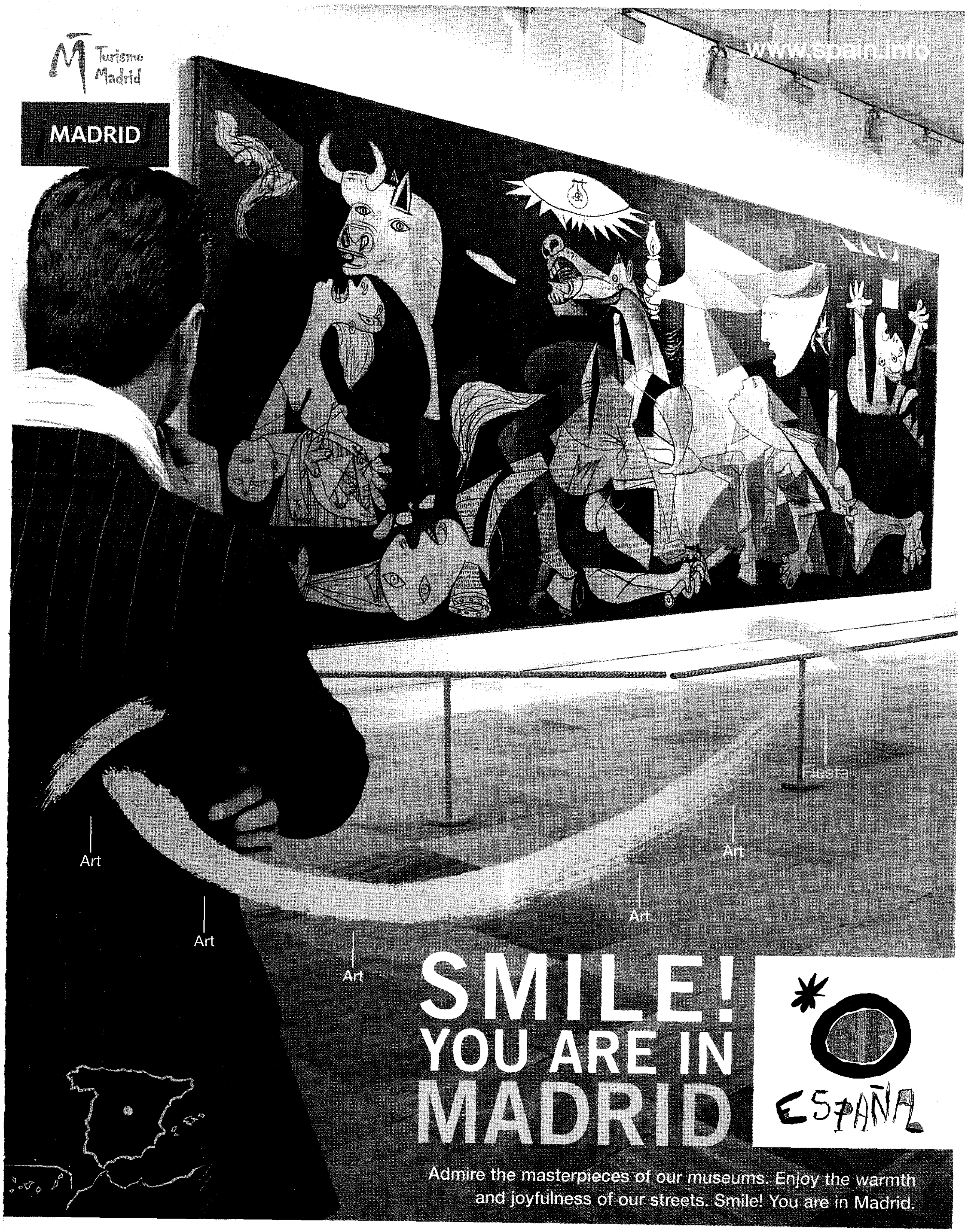
Utzon's new plan proposes sinking the floor of the theatre in order to expand the pit, increase and improve seating, and make room for a ceiling that will deliver better acoustics. He has revisited his idea for large convex shapes, formed on a cylinder, billowing out like the sound waves they reflect. A series of these shapes, made in plywood and diminishing in size, leads the eye mesmerically toward the proscenium. The hollow interiors of the plywood sections allow conduits for air-conditioning and wiring.

When I asked what sources he had drawn on for inspiration, he talked about the spiralling limbs of certain trees, and the "geometric secrets" of large mosques and Gothic churches. I asked him what colors he had chosen.

"The most beautiful colors, of course," he said with a sly grin. "I am enthusiastic about the colors you find in Tibetan temples; the edge of orange just before it becomes red, or of violet when it becomes blue. I am thinking of the copper color of roofs . . . that would be a



"You had me at goodbye."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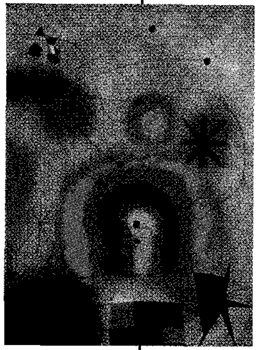
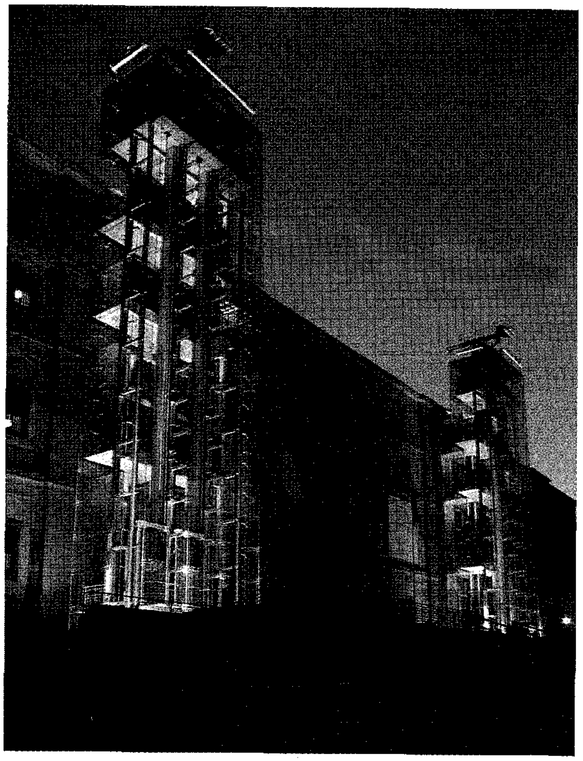
Art Break in Madrid

No trip to the capital of Madrid is complete without a visit to the Prado and Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza. A principal landmark for national and international art exhibitions, the **Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía** (MNCARS) houses Spain's museum of modern art that includes Pablo Picasso's world-famous protest of the German aerial bombing of Basque town Guernica, along with preliminary sketches and drawings of the seminal work from 1937.

Once the San Carlos General hospital, the remodeling of this late eighteenth-century building of Carlos III's Madrid was completed in the late eighties, and today Reina Sofía is considered Madrid's answer to London's Tate Modern or Pompidou Centre in Paris. Three new buildings, created by award-winning French architect Jean Nouvel were just added last year and the undertaking has doubled the interior space of the Museum, making it one of the world's largest art galleries.



Reina Sofía's permanent collection is almost exclusively comprised of twentieth-century art spanning Cubism to Surrealism to Abstract art and represented by important Spanish artists such as Picasso, Juan Gris, Salvador Dalí, Julio González, Eduardo Arroyo, Geraldo Rueda, and Antoni Tàpies, among others. The collection comprises more than 13,000 paintings and sculpture including that of Alexander Calder, Jean Arp, Vassily Kandinsky, Max Ernst, Yves



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Tanguy, Francis Bacon, Henry Moore, Le Corbusier, Fernand Léger, and Rene Magritte. The nineteen-forties to the early eighties are also represented with works by Antonio Saura and Eduardo Chillida.

The museum's top floor library is the largest of its kind in Spain dedicated to art. Some of the books came from the old Spanish Museum of Contemporary Art and the collection includes audiovisual and electronic material well worth reviewing.

From now through November 22nd, in the museum's Sabatini Building, the work of conceptual artist Dennis Oppenheim will be the subject of an important exhibition. Works from the Museum holdings corresponding to different periods in his long career are on display.

Reina Sofía (museoreinasofía.mcu.es) is also home to a number of art-related activities such as poetry recitals, contemporary music concerts, conferences, and courses. The museum is open each day, except Tuesday, from 10 A.M.–9 P.M.; Sundays 10 A.M.–2:30 P.M. and is conveniently located at the Atocha, one of Madrid's busiest hubs, near some of the city's most prominent art galleries.

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wonderful color for the seating." All the years of living under the harsh sun of Spain had taught him, he said, to appreciate color in the early morning and at dusk—"at the moments of change." He said that Matisse, who also lived in bright sunshine, "has a very small palette of color; Picasso also has not very much color. This happens, I think, if the light is too bright. But Scandinavia, where the light is muted, has made some marvellous painters." He went into the sun room, returning with a sketch of a sunrise by the Swedish painter Carl Kylberg. Every color in the small painting is in transit—yellow becoming orange, green edging toward blue.

Knowing of his interest in Berber architecture, I had brought him a book I had worked on, about Morocco. He leafed through it eagerly, stopping and jabbing a finger at a photograph of dazzling gold wool, laid out to dry on the mud-brick rooftop of a dyer's workshop in Fez. "This is what we must have for the curtain of the Opera Theatre!" he exclaimed, smiling broadly. "If we go to Fez, can you lead us to this place?"

He said he was pleased that construction had begun on the Western Loggia project. Until now, attending plays has been a second-rate experience at the Opera House, because, unlike the opera and concert halls, the theatres for drama have had no visual relationship with the harbor setting, and their foyers, spaces originally intended for backstage functions, were enclosed and cramped. But to bring the harbor into the foyers meant violating the mass of the podium, which Utzon had intended to stand as a solid counterpoint to the light sails soaring above it. He described his solution as a return to his original inspiration, the platform temples of the Yucatán. He drew out several photographs that showed platforms rising out of the jungle. There were, he pointed out, large openings in the base, but these were masked by the march of a substantial colonnade. So he arrived at the idea of large, deep niche windows, visually contained by the colonnaded space, where theatregoers can step outside and enjoy the harbor: "Hamlet's castle here in Helsingør has these deep niches, and I have them also in my Majorca house. Combined with the rhythm of the colonnade—I think of it as giving lipstick to the building."

Bob Carr, until recently the state premier, had shown me a letter that Utzon had written to him in 2003, in which he said he had "of course often wondered if I could have acted differently back then, in a way which would have allowed me to continue the work." In the letter, he concludes that the decision was "out of my hands." I hoped that Utzon would elaborate on the letter, but he brushed my question aside. During the long, silent years, when he sat with Lis on his lonely Majorcan clifftop fighting off depression, his children say that he gradually let go of bitterness, and these days determinedly focusses on remembering only the positive side of things.

"The main thing is that it even happened," he said, rising restlessly from his seat next to Lis and coming to sit beside me on the sofa. "First, that they would give a foreign young fellow the responsibility to undertake such a thing—the most exciting and the most difficult project you could imagine." Nothing comparable, he said, could have happened in Europe at the time. "We had four hundred and fifty different trades working on that site. It was a fantastic ballet every day. Huge elements—ten-ton pieces of concrete. They would raise them up into the air, and they would meet on the millimetre." His long-fingered hands fanned the space between us as he remembered how it was.

"Everyone was doing more than their best. How can you express this? I asked a Finnish carpenter, and he said the word in Finnish is *sisu*—the desire for something extra that you pull out of yourself." Designing the Opera House had been a great opportunity, he concluded, in which not one hour had been spent in vain.

Leaning forward, as if he wanted to be sure I was paying attention, he recalled something that the engineer on the project, Ove Arup, had said to encourage him as difficulties began to mount. "He said it is like when you climb Everest. You get a glimpse of Everest, and then it disappears. For a long time, all you see are the rows of hills in your way, and you can't imagine that you will ever get there. And then, suddenly, you see Everest again, sparkling in the sunshine." ♦

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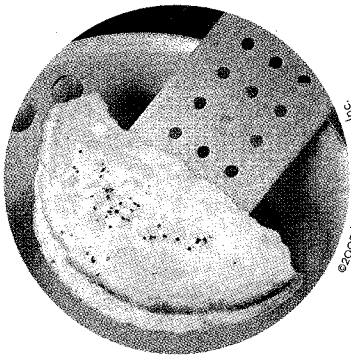

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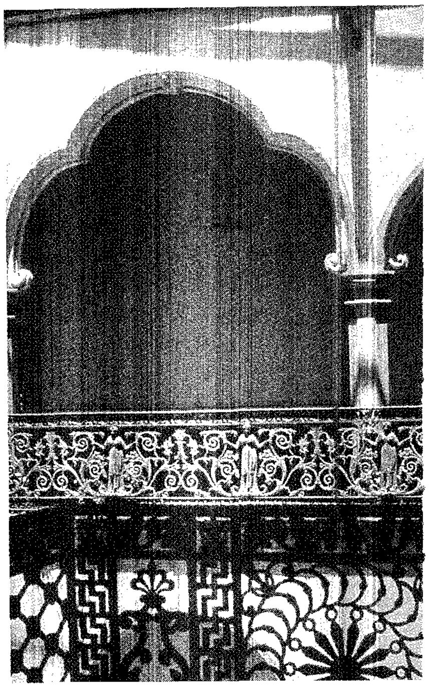

OPTICAL ALLUSIONS

The awesome scale and millennial span of Mexico's landmarks—from the Maya city of Chichén Itzá to the Pritzker prize-winning modern structures of Luis Barragán and Enrique Norten's glass and steel buildings of the twenty-first century—make it satisfying to discover smaller vantages where you can view the intersection of different eras. It is here that you can witness the continuity that informed twentieth-century muralists no less than it did the Aztecs who designed seven temples (1375–1502), one on top of another, at the site of **Templo Mayor.**

A short stroll from the complex, you can walk through the Baroque portals of the **Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso**, a former Jesuit school built in the late-sixteenth century. Inside, arcaded courtyards are brilliant with the post-revolution murals of David Alfaro Siqueiros and José Clemente Orozco. Diego Rivera painted his mural, "La Creación," here after returning from his first glimpse of pre-Conquest murals at Chichén Itzá. (It was there at the school that he met a young Frida Kahlo.)

You can enjoy the largest private collection of works by Rivera and Kahlo at the **Museo Dolores Olmedo Patiño** in Xochimilco, just south of Mexico City. Housed in a grand seventeenth-century hacienda, amid gardens of native plants, the museum's diverse galleries let you study hundreds of pre-Hispanic images alongside those painted by Rivera of his wife and of Olmedo, his longtime friend and patron.

Historian Edward Gibbon called Guadalajara, in the southwestern state of Jalisco, "the Florence of Mexico" even before the city's visual riches were enhanced by the **Instituto Cultural Cabañas**, a UNESCO World Heritage site. This neoclassical structure was built by Manuel Tolsá as a Catholic house of charity in the early eighteen-hundreds, with twenty-three courtyards. In the nineteen-thirties, Orozco brought to it the dazzling drama of fifty-three murals, including "El Hombre de Fuego" in the main chapel's dome.

Architecture buffs head for the desert city of **Zacatecas** in the north central highlands to see the extraordinarily ornate façade of the town's pink stone cathedral. Thanks to two museums created here by the twentieth-century artists Pedro and Rafael Coronel, they can also immerse themselves in stunning collections of pre-Hispanic work, Spanish paintings and drawings, and Mexican masks. So that even in this out-of-the-way place, eras intersect to invite and indulge contemplation.

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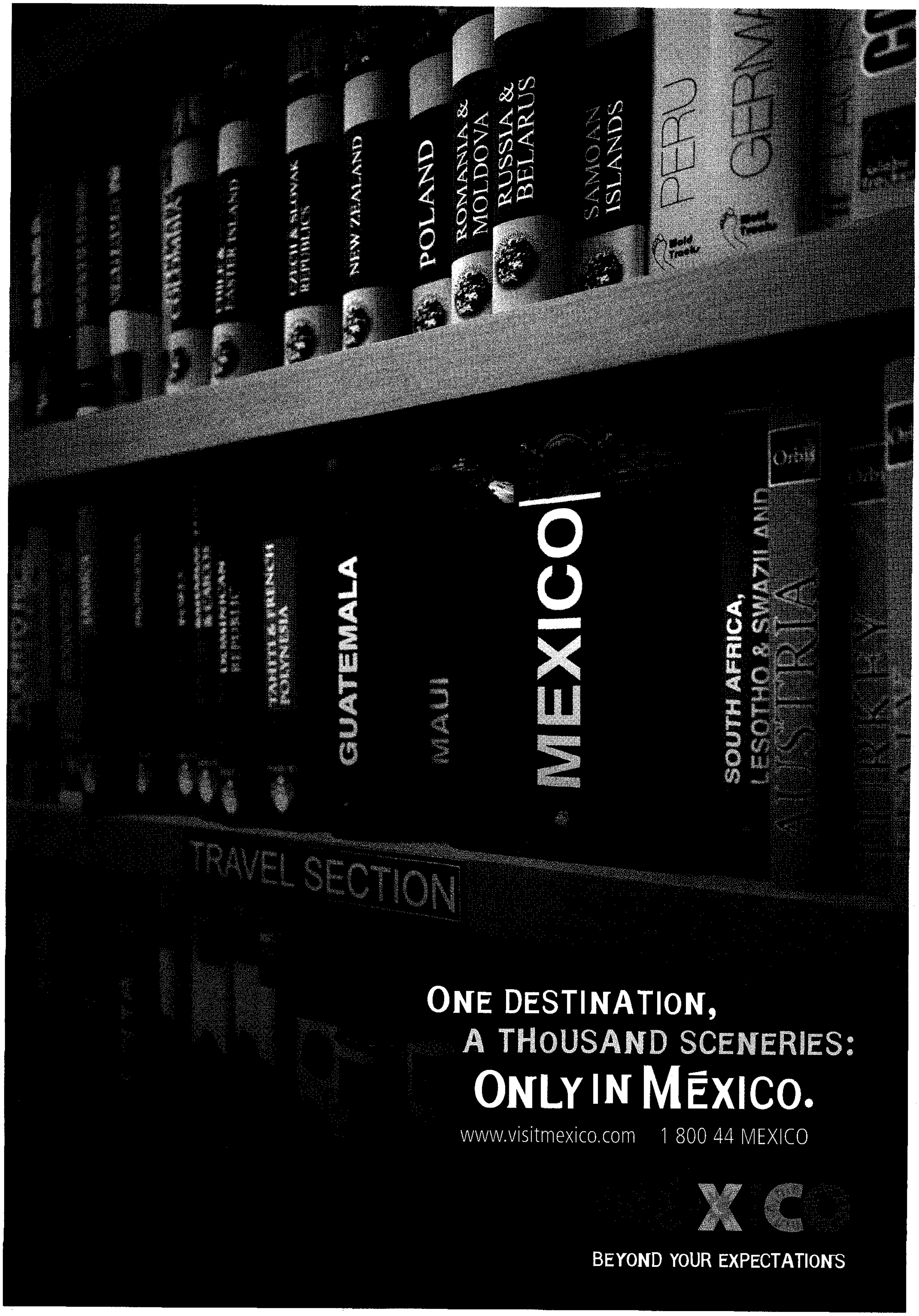
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LETTER FROM JAPAN

THE KIMONO PAINTER

A modern master of wearable art.

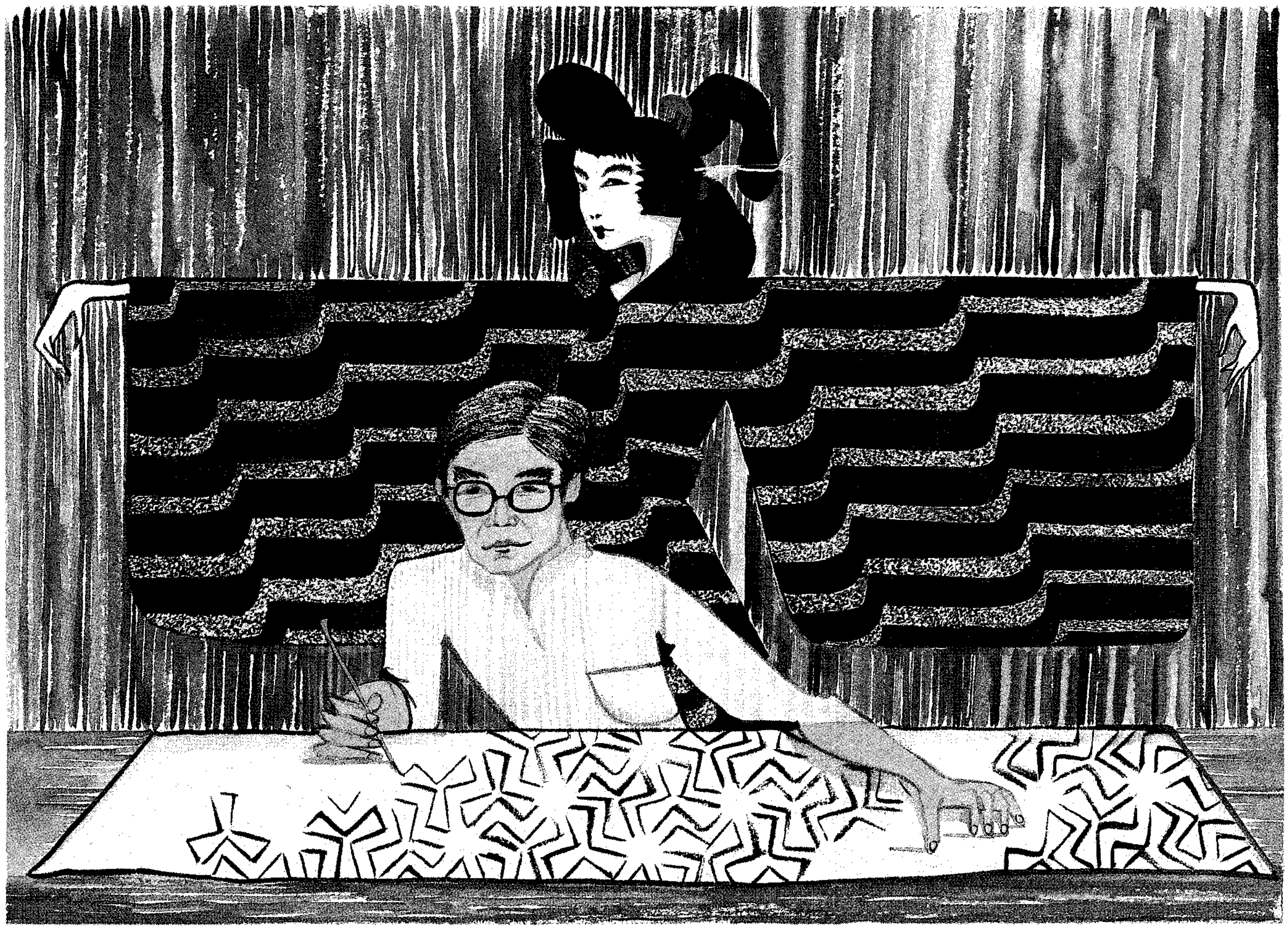
BY JUDITH THURMAN

Traditional cultures that set a high premium on conformity often prescribe their members' attire. Ethnic and regional costumes have largely disappeared from urban life in the West, with one exception—an example of folk garb that defines modernity. The American bluejean, like a mutant seed, has supplanted native varieties wherever it is sown. Japan, however, is rare, if not unique, among industrialized countries in having retained its national dress, the kimono, into the twenty-first century.

Women (or men) in kimonos may no longer be a common sight, but they don't turn heads—at least, not those of their compatriots. Last summer, at rush hour in the Tokyo subway, there seemed to be about one passenger taking dainty steps in a kimono to every three hundred in Western street wear. Above the symphonic rumble of a moving crowd, the entrance of a kimono produced to my ear a soulful trill—like that of an archaic flute. When a wimpled nun passes you on the sidewalks of Rome, she strikes the same high, fleeting grace note.

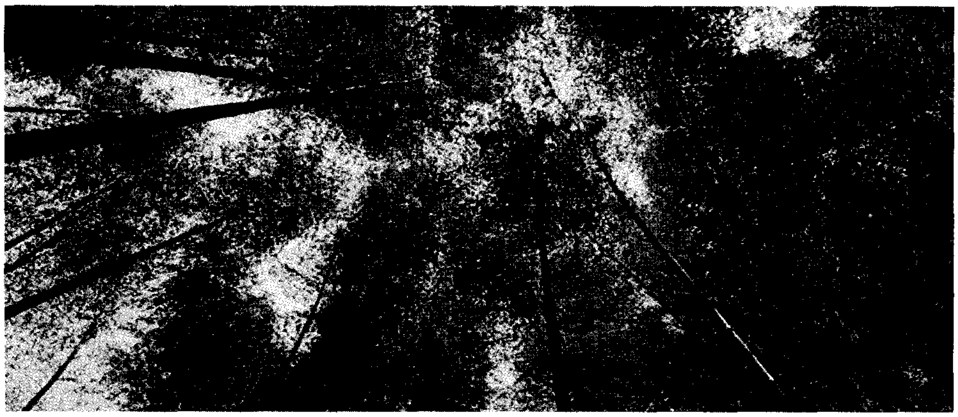
The kimono is a long, ample robe shaped like a capital "T," which is wrapped closely around the body and fastened with a cloth sash. It was introduced to Japan in ancient times, along with so many other arts and refinements, from China. A twelfth-century illustrated edition of Lady Murasaki's eleventh-century novel "The Tale of Genji" depicts the elaborate court dress of the Heian period (794-1185), when the nobility of Nara and Kyoto swathed themselves in as many as a dozen kimonos, each successive layer exposing an edge of the one beneath, along with a wearer's faults of taste in mixing and matching, which were punished, as they are everywhere, with lashes of ridicule.

Kimonos have loose sleeves of varying length, and are classified according to the width of their opening at the wrist. A simple white *kosode* (which means "small sleeve") was the Heian undergarment. Its practicality relative to the *osode* ("big sleeve"), with its even more flaccid dewlaps under the arms, gradually prevailed. Courtesans, who have always been arbiters of style in Japan, preferred the svelter silhouette of the *kosode*, and commoners adopted it as outerwear. Since the Edo period (1600-



RUBEN TOLEDO

Kunihiko Moriguchi is one of Japan's preëminent practitioners of yuzen, a dyeing technique invented in Kyoto three centuries ago.



The value of seeing the whole forest.

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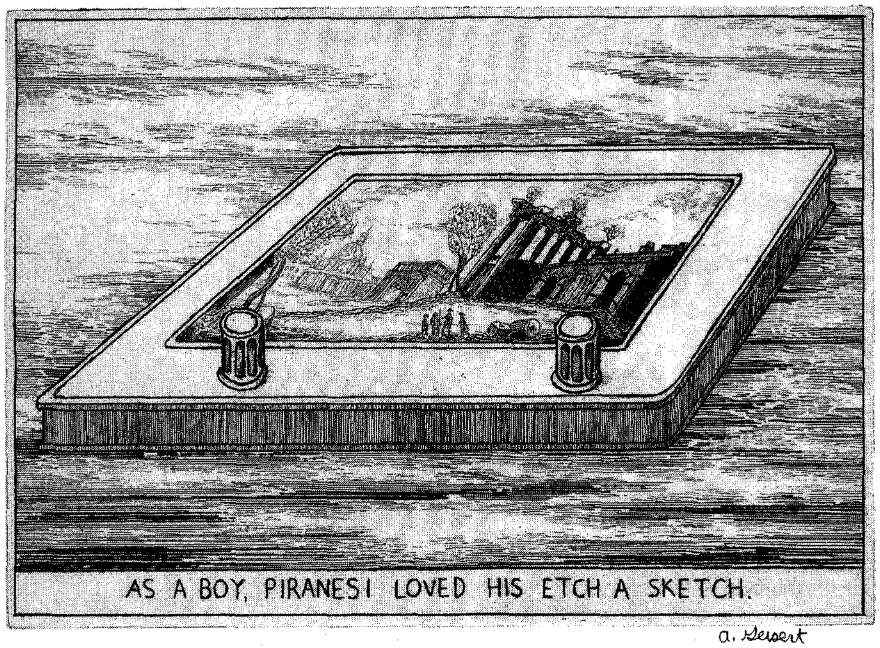


AS A BOY, PIRANESI LOVED HIS ETCH A SKETCH.

1868), the proportions of the kimono have scarcely varied. It is cut from a bolt of fabric thirteen yards long by fifteen inches wide, using the full width of the cloth. Every garment is basically identical, consisting of a flat collar and eight panels, two each for the back and front, and four for the sleeves.

Fashion may be ephemeral, but solving the conundrum of how to stand out while fitting in seems to be one of its eternal functions. Though conspicuously lavish kimonos flouted the frugal ethos of both Buddhist and samurai culture, the desire to own them couldn't be suppressed—not even by the strict sumptuary laws of the Tokugawa shogunate. These measures were intended to curb the inflationary spending (and the social pretensions) of a rising merchant class by forbidding its members to wear embroidered silk or cloth woven with gold thread. In that respect, the fourth shogun made a grave miscalculation when, in 1652, he "liberated" three thousand concubines who were taxing his purse. The ladies went home to their fathers—wealthy traders, for the most part—and their kinswomen, seeing their finery, competed to outdo it.

Kimonos with a painted surface cleverly circumvented the sumptuary laws, and artisans learned to produce noble-looking embellishment with common materials. By the late seventeenth century, *yuzen-zome*, a technique of resist dyeing, was a flourishing cottage industry, centered in Kyoto. *Yuzen* imparts an indelible design—waterproof and washable—with the minutely intricate detail of a weave or a print, to the kimono fabric while preserving its suppleness. The art is still alive in its birthplace, more than three hundred years later, even though hand labor has become the exorbitant luxury that golden embroidery used to be, and the costliest kimonos are now worn only on ceremonial occasions.

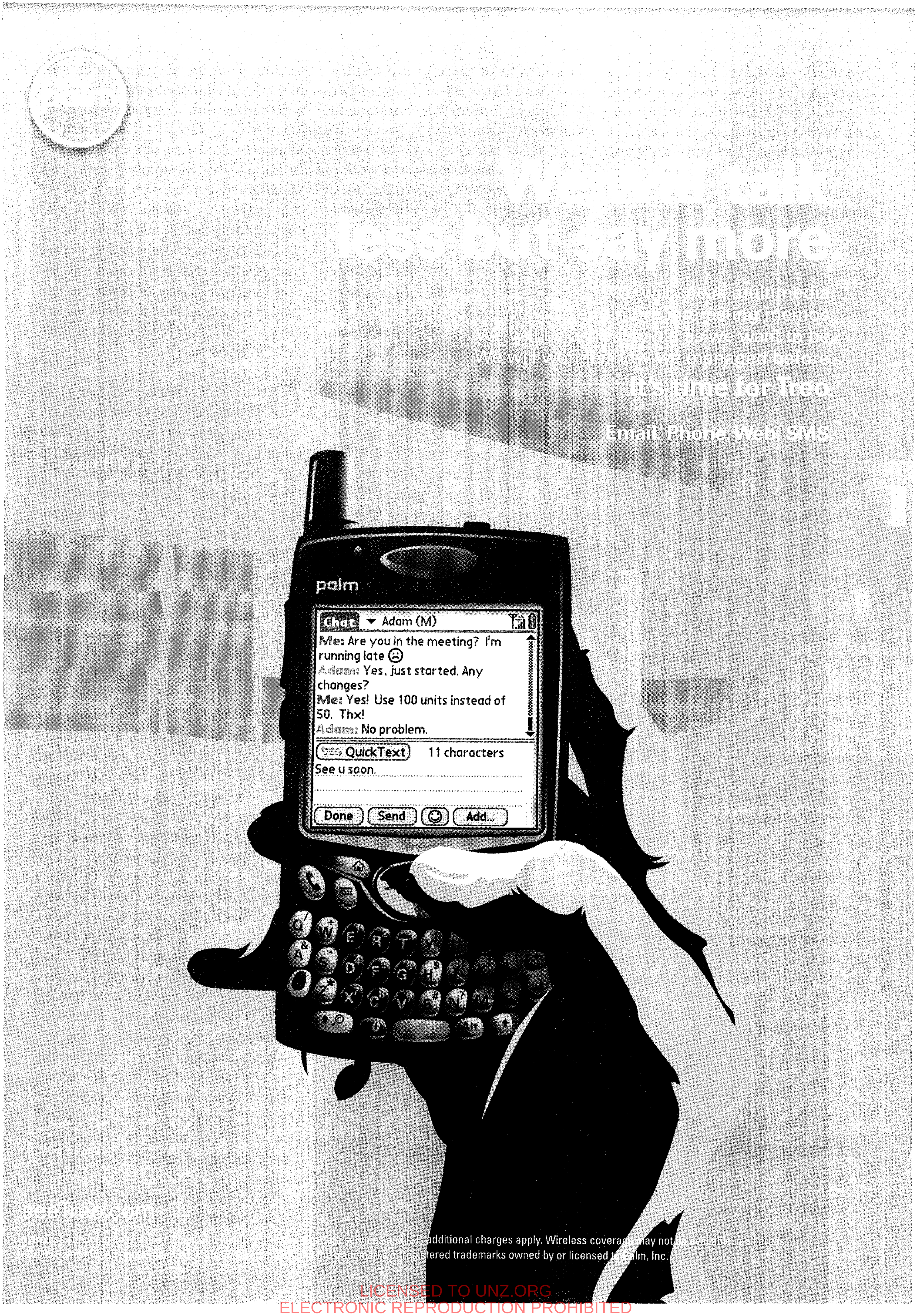
Kunihiko Moriguchi is one of Japan's preëminent kimono painters. At sixty-four, he has practiced *yuzen* for almost forty years. Last summer, when I visited his workshop in Kyoto, and renewed a long-interrupted friendship, he surprised me by saying that the likeliest client for one of his unique creations (which cost between forty thousand and eighty thousand dollars) isn't a geisha or a rich man's wife but a self-made woman, often a business executive in her forties, who buys it for a family wedding or a corporate social event. Each robe requires at least six to eight weeks of meticulous workmanship, and Moriguchi's three-man studio can finish about two a month. "If I didn't feel so responsible to my apprentices, I'd probably be much lazier," he said. "But no one becomes a *yuzen* painter just, or primarily, for the livelihood. It is a way of life."

Moriguchi and I first met in Paris, about twenty years ago. I used to stay there at the apartment of an old friend, a literary hostess and retired curator, in Montparnasse. On a winter evening in 1986, I was sitting alone in her salon, watching the news. The key turned in the front door, and I assumed that it was my friend, home early from a weekend in the country, but a stranger entered. He seemed as startled by my presence as I was by his, though, with a disarming smile and a slight bow, he simply said, "*Bonsoir.*"

This second house guest introduced himself familiarly as Kuni, presuming correctly that I would recognize his nickname. He was a diminutive Japanese man with a handsome face, a boyish aura, and a thatch of dark hair. Had it not begun turning gray, one would never have guessed that he was well past forty. He spoke excellent French, and was smartly tailored, yet his ease of manner was bohemian. I knew of him as an artist, and a protégé of our hostess, who had played the same role in his youth that she had in mine. So I found another wineglass, and linens for the spare room, and Moriguchi and I quickly established our adoptive fraternity.

The Japanese did not make a hierarchical distinction between the fine and applied arts until the nineteenth century, and in the world of animation they are re-merging. Moriguchi's career blurs the borders, too. He is a well-esteemed "pure artist" (he uses the term ironically, because no one knows better than a purist that there is no such thing) who was in Europe, that winter, for one-man shows of his abstract works on paper at a Left Bank gallery and a Swiss museum. He also has a distinguished résumé as a curator, and he helped to design the Japanese wing at the Metropolitan Museum. (Thanks in part to his advice, the galleries feel more like a temple pavilion and less like a showcase for imported treasures.) But his renown in Japan, and among connoisseurs of Asian textiles in the West, is as a *yuzen* master and spokesman.

Miyazaki Yuzen (1681-1763), who gave the genre its name, was an artist-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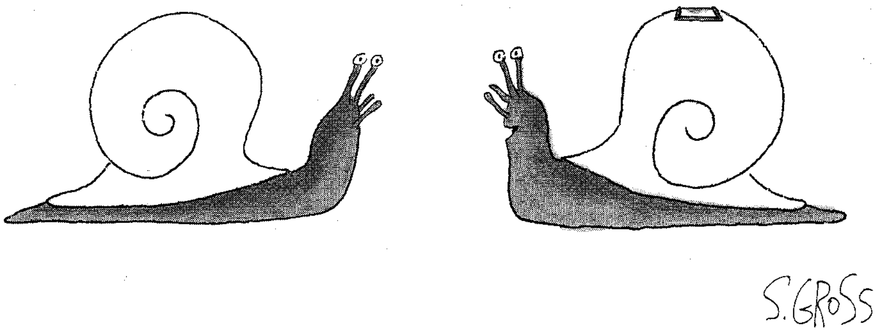
monk whose painted fans attracted a passionate following in Gion-machi, Kyoto's geisha district. Yuzen's motifs were traditional, and he depicted flowers and landscapes with surpassing elegance, but he added fresh and, to the contemporary eye, radically new elements: vignettes with human figures; famous monuments (which were popular as souvenirs); and literary allusions—in particular, to "The Tale of Genji." According to Ken Kirihata, a textile historian, the style first caught on among the "big spenders" who patronized the city's pleasure quarters and the women who entertained them. ("The Life of an Amorous Man," a quaintly comic novel about libertine intrigue, by Yuzen's contemporary Ihara Saikaku, devotes considerable attention to the subject of *yuzen* as an aphrodisiac.) But fashion often behaves like an epidemic, and *yuzen's* appeal could not be contained. The mistress and her serving maid were equally beguiled.

Eventually, the industrious monk branched out into clothing, and as the demand for his textiles grew he perfected his resist techniques. Artists like Moriguchi have continued to refine them. "The shape of the kimono has ceased to evolve, and tradition dictates the process," Moriguchi says. "My aim is to preserve its dignity for posterity. But the simplicity of the construction is precisely what favors the complexity of design. And tradition also dictates, paradoxically, that the expression of *yuzen* has to keep changing. I want to make sure it remains a living art."

About ten per cent of Moriguchi's kimonos are designed for Western collectors and museums or for competitive annual exhibitions of traditional crafts sponsored by the Ministry of Culture. The fiftieth of these group displays took place last week in Tokyo, where Moriguchi mounted a simultaneous solo show of his latest robes. At this stage of his career, he says, he is more interested in the kimono as a work of art than as a wearable object, but one of his most startling innovations was a softened cummerbund—more of a "self-belt" than an obi—that he treated as an integral element of the textile design rather than a contrasting accessory. It remains to be seen whether his private clients will warm to the experiment. They typically own at least four of his pieces, and one patron has a wardrobe of twenty.

A kimono destined for such a woman begins with her visit to Moriguchi's workroom. Her age, size, and station will influence the direction he takes, and she may look through his sketchbooks and suggest a palette, but the commission is otherwise an act of trust on her side. On his, it is part architecture, part couture, and an act that keeps faith with the romantic spirit of *yuzen*—what Moriguchi's wife, Keiko, calls "a man's homage to an ideal woman."

The original charm of the monk's fans was what Kirihata calls their modernity, and Moriguchi's sophisticated work has a strong mathematical component. In one kimono, and without help from a computer, he set out, in the footsteps of Dürer and Escher, to disprove a geometric theory of tessellation which holds that a flat surface can't be completely covered by pentagons (and succeeded, with a little fudging). Op art was an early influence, and his use of boldly graphic kinetic patterns was considered revolutionary when he introduced them thirty years ago. Many of his designs have been inspired by the principles of Buddhist landscape architecture. They are abstract distillations of sand, snow, moonbeams, a riverbed, a flowering cliff, or a harrowed field. "Dawn" is a vertical arrangement of white trapezoids on a turquoise ground. "Darkness" has the sombre beauty of a raked gravel garden. But his latest kimonos, like their sashes, take liberties with a certain notion of decorum. They are enlivened with freewheeling circles, triangular sawteeth, or asymmetrical zigzags in grayed pastels. A pattern of silvery filaments against a pointillist sky seems to celebrate Japan's famous suspension bridges.

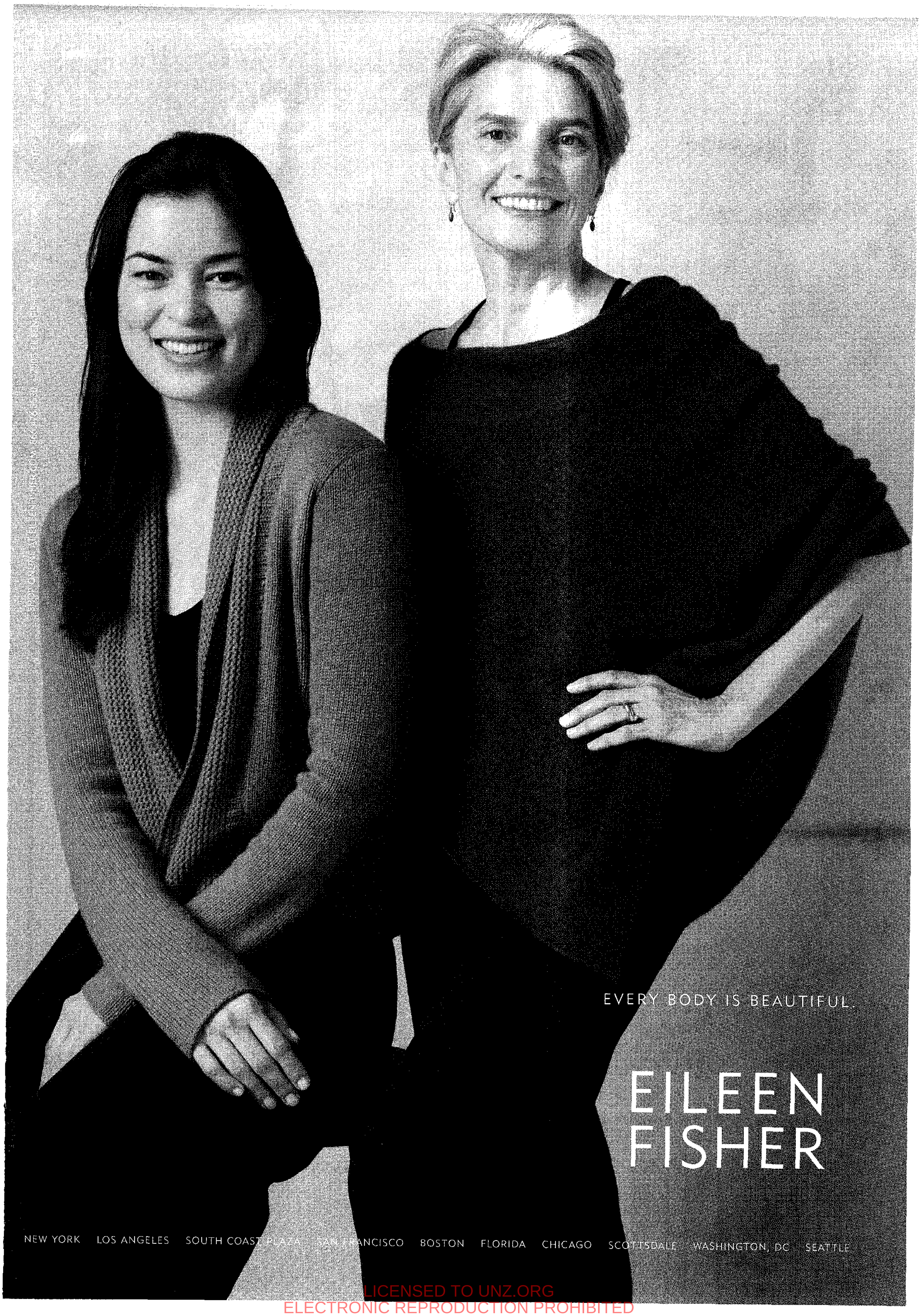


"I put in a skylight, and it's made a world of difference."

One does not casually embrace a traditional Japanese vocation. It is almost a religious calling, and the path to grace in kimono painting, as in many devotions, is through surrender. Students of traditional crafts submit to long apprenticeships, some lasting a lifetime. Moriguchi was old for a *yuzen* beginner—twenty-six—when he entered the studio of a legendary sensei, his father, Kako.

The senior Moriguchi is considered one of the greatest *yuzen* masters of the past century. He is now ninety-five, and he worked until two years ago. The Empress Nagako, Hirohito's consort, was an appreciative client, and hanging in the family dining room is a color photograph of her wearing a Moriguchi kimono—pale blue, with a bamboo motif—to receive the Queen of England on a state visit. Kako was relatively young—fifty-eight—when he was elevated to the rank of *ningen kokuho*, an honorific meaning "holder of an intangible cultural property." This makes him one of Japan's hundred and seventeen Living National Treasures. The designation was established at the end of the American occupation, in 1950, in part to prevent Japan's traditional handicrafts (woodwork, cloisonné, swordmaking, art-paper production, dollmaking, lacquerware, metalwork, ceramics, and textiles) from succumbing to oblivion in a rapidly modernizing society. "Tangible cultural properties" (landmarks and monuments) and performance arts (Noh and Kabuki) are similarly protected.

The eldest son in a family of artisans is traditionally the heir apparent, although Kako's firstborn, Masafumi,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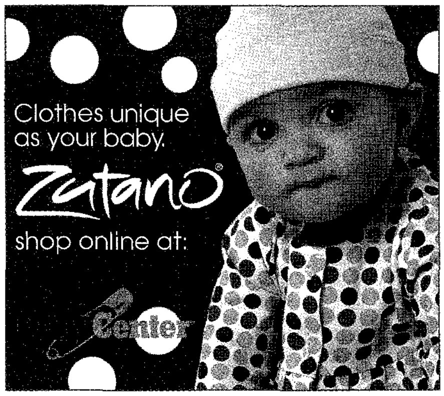

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chose to become an architect. Kunihiko helped in the studio as a schoolboy, and studied Japanese painting and art history, but he wasn't yet prepared to assume the mantle. In August of 1963, with a degree from the Kyoto City University of Arts, he sailed for Europe. Competing against two hundred other applicants, he had won a two-year French government scholarship to the École des Arts Décoratifs, in Paris.

Travelling abroad with him were several hundred treasures from five centuries of Japanese art destined for an exhibition at the Petit Palais, including a portrait attributed to Takanobu of the first shogun, Minamoto—a mysteriously expressive study that is, in its way, Japan's "Mona Lisa." Neither the twenty-two-year-old kimono-painter's son nor the eight-hundred-year-old warlord had ever left his native country. Japanese museum officials, impressed by Moriguchi's French and his knowledge of the works on loan, asked him to interpret for them during the voyage, and they later invited him to help install the show. Sometime in late September, as he was choosing wallpaper for the galleries and directing the carpenters, a lordly figure, dressed in the trousers of a Camargue cowboy, made an entrance. Moriguchi had no idea that this "insanely chic" personage was the curator of the exhibition and a great painter in his own right—Balthus. They began to argue in a courtly though heated fashion about the proper way to hang some eighteenth-century Zen drawings—hell sketches and hungry-ghost sketches, among others—with Moriguchi defending his traditional approach and Balthus explaining that "orthodox principles" were of less interest to him than the "fantasy" of the monks who made them. Charmed both by the upstart's ignorance of his fame and by his deep, if still unworldly, refinement, Balthus invited Moriguchi to lunch, and then to a weekend at the château of a former mistress, and they embarked on a lifelong friendship.

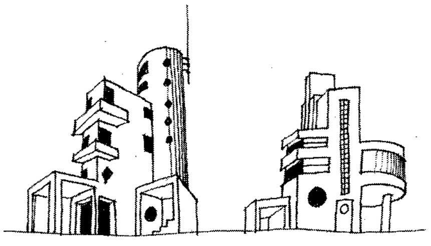
While Balthus was touring Kyoto's temples choosing art for the exhibition, he had fallen in love with his interpreter, Setsuko Ideta, a young student who became his second wife. On a visit to her parents, in 1964, the couple called upon Kako, and Balthus later told Kunihiko that he was staggered by the painterliness of his father's work, and had stayed until the early morning discussing their common artistic ground. Kunihiko, in the meantime, spent a summer in southern Europe singing for his supper in Greek tavernas. His two school years passed quickly, and after graduation he received a tempting job offer from a graphic-arts studio. Balthus urged him to reconsider it. He had recently been posted to Rome, to direct the French Academy, and he was restoring the Villa Medici, the grand Renaissance palazzo where the Academy is housed. He invited Moriguchi to be his guest for six months while he sorted out his fate. There was one stipulation: that Moriguchi cease painting for that interval. "I was just supposed to live—and to reflect," he told me. "But I knew Balthus wanted me to succeed my father, believing that any career I might have as a graphic artist in the West would be mediocre in comparison."

At Christmas, Balthus took Setsuko to Switzerland. Moriguchi was on his own at the villa, and, once he had made his choice, it seemed easier not having to say goodbye.

Kako Moriguchi's studio is now his son's, an attic loft of about seven hundred square feet whose low ceiling is latticed with bamboo drying racks. The air is close—the dust from an open window would be fatal to wet silk—and a heady mixture of odors (fixatives, solvents, tobacco smoke) stings one's nostrils. In an alcove at one end is a small library of art books and a computer station. An array of brushes hangs on the wall behind a drawing table, close to the wooden floor. Moriguchi's two apprentices (his father employed a much larger staff) kneel or sit cross-legged on mats, working with trancelike concentration in pools of lamplight.

Moriguchi still sounds and looks like the boyish stranger I met twenty years ago, and he is so relaxed in French, his third language (he learned English at a Protestant elementary school), that the magisterial persona he projects in the studio came as a surprise. When he introduced his apprentices, explaining my visit and inviting them to speak frankly, they looked perplexed, if not horrified, and an awkward silence ensued. The junior man, Takashi Ashida, is thirty-two. He has the finely modelled, ascetic beauty of a Heian bodhisattva. (Moriguchi says that he counts on Ashida's serenity to rescue him from his "creative panics.") Ashida's long fingers move at a dreamy pace, and that is how he speaks. "I do not think I am very patient," he said. "With time, though, I have learned. It has taken eleven years." The senior man, Kazume Abiko, is an opera buff, and was listening to "Don Carlo." Abiko has been working for the Moriguchis since he entered Kako's service, some forty years ago, at the age of fifteen. He asked Kunihiko to keep him on because, he said, "one must live *yuzen*, and I could only do so where there is love." He had also long since admitted to himself that "any kimono of my own would only be an epigone of my master's. It is not my place to discuss creation." Moriguchi told me later, though, that Abiko can be vehement if he doesn't like a design, and that the otherworldly Ashida, who has a wife, two children, and a degree in textile design, is quite ambitious, and will undoubtedly open his own studio when his training is complete.

Some *yuzen* painters use ramie or cotton, but Moriguchi prefers white crêpe spun by Brazilian or Chinese silkworms, and woven in Japan. Once the garment has been made up, and the design modelled to scale, he sketches it freehand onto the fabric, with a fine brush dipped in soluble ink derived from a tiny blue wildflower, the *aobana*. When the ink is dry, the kimono is unstitched, and its panels are pinned tautly to ribbed bamboo stretchers. At this stage, it is ready for a first coat of resist. There are many genres of resist decoration, and children practice a simple one when they stencil their names onto lunchboxes. Whatever the resist—starch, paper, wax, or wood—it protects each discrete area of detail from taking color, or losing its definition, as the adjacent area is treated. *Yuzen* painters use rice paste, which is squeezed, like icing, through a brown mulberry-paper cone that has been waterproofed with persimmon tannin. The diameter of its nozzle controls the relative thickness of the resist, which is sometimes no wider than a hairbreadth. Then the underside of the silk is sprayed with water to dissolve the *aobana* ink, and to increase the absorbency of the rice paste, and it is primed for the dye. Moriguchi prepares the colors from scratch—indigo, cochineal, shell powder, onion skin—steeping plants or insects and grinding minerals. He delegates many chores to the apprentices, but never the painting, because a brushstroke, like a fingerprint, is unique to its hand.



Abiko's forte is a resist technique of the Edo period—*makinori*—which was originally inspired by the sand garden at the Silver Temple. It had been lost until the elder Moriguchi noticed an Edo *kosode* at the Tokyo National Museum which had a patch of mottling that intrigued him. It took him some fifteen years of trial-and-error experimentation to reproduce it, and it became his hallmark. *Makinori* are tiny grains of pulverized zinc which resemble poppy seeds. They are mixed with rice paste and sprinkled on the wet silk, individually or in pinches, then coated with wood wax to prevent cracking, and fixed with soy juice, before a graduated wash of color is applied. Then the *makinori* are tweezed off and rinsed away, leaving a delicate, speckled pattern that is whiter or grayer (a mist or a flurry) depending on the density of the resist. "With Kako-san, the grains are a background for the figurative motifs," Abiko said. "In the work of Kunihiko-san, the nuances of *makinori* are themselves a motif. The effect is more severe, and the labor of applying and removing them intensely demanding. There is no room for error."

A *yuzen* master's reputation, however, depends not only on his consummate virtuosity as a technician but on his ability to imagine how a two-dimensional composition will translate into a three-dimensional object—"kimono" literally means "the thing worn"—and how a specific woman's body and gestures will bring it to life. At that moment, the robe

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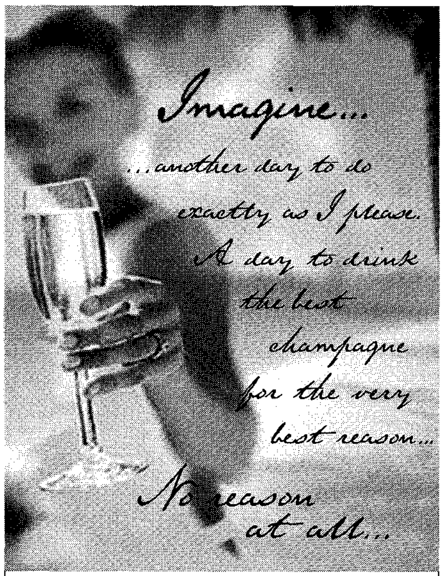

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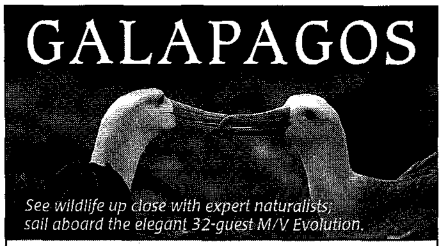

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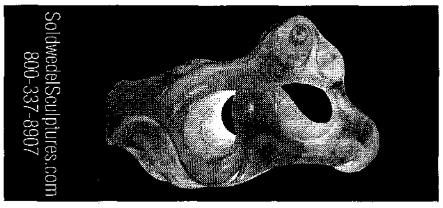

acquires what Moriguchi calls its "fourth dimension": it becomes a moving picture. (His elegiac work "Darkness" plays an emblematic role in a recent film shown on Japanese television in which the father of the heroine, a geisha, is a *yuzen* master.)

The workshop occupies the top story of the family house, which seems more venerable than its actual age, about a century. It is a rambling wooden dwelling with an interior garden, in the old quarter of the city. Kunihiko and his siblings grew up here among their father's disciples, who shared their meals and living space, and on the morning after his marriage to Keiko Terada, in 1975, she joined them. "Our communal household wasn't simply a practical arrangement," he told me, as Keiko served us tea and sweets in their tatami room. "It was about the transmission of a culture, and it required a lot of sacrifice from my wife and sons. When I proposed to Keiko, whom I met through a friend—a former sumo wrestler—I asked if she could accept it. She said yes, perhaps without reflecting what it meant. We married four months later. She had incredible courage."

Keiko is a pale, radiantly pretty woman in her mid-fifties. Her composure is a foil for her husband's intensity. ("If I am successful in the world, it is because of her profound tact," Moriguchi says.) She is the daughter of a Tokyo dentist, and when she met Kunihiko she was working as her father's hygienist. "I wasn't prepared for the world of *yuzen*," she told me, "even though my parents were of the old school." Her mother had neglected to give her a domestic education, on the principle that a future mother-in-law should have that prerogative. On Keiko's wedding day (she wore two kimonos painted by Kako, including a white robe with a crane motif that is one of his masterpieces, and a black-and-white robe with a rainbow of stripes by her journeyman fiancé, which he labored on for six months), she embarked upon a feudal vassalage of her own.

Keiko's tact was never more essential to the household than in 1999, when Kako had a stroke that left him partially paralyzed, and he had to relearn to use his right hand. His lucidity also suffered. Moriguchi says that his father's mental decline was "particularly hard for me to accept. He had been my spiritual companion for sixty years. We set an example of a father and son working together with mutual respect. I carried on his work, but he always left me free to differentiate myself."

Until last year, when Moriguchi was finally persuaded by his friend and patron Madame Takako Shimazu, the former Princess Suga—Hirohito's youngest daughter, who knows something about dynastic obligations—to ignore "shaming lectures" from busybodies and move his parents into a private nursing home, Keiko, their full-time caretaker, had never, in thirty years, had a real vacation. "I owed her a honeymoon," Moriguchi told me sheepishly. "I bought first-class tickets and took her to Paris."

Many of Japan's most prominent artisans are the scions of dynasties going back ten or even fifteen generations. The Moriguchis are an exception. Kako, born in 1909, was the first member of his clan to practice *yuzen*. The family's forebears, Kunihiko says, were village chiefs who, for at least half a millennium, had owned land in the Shiga Prefecture, east of Kyoto, where the waters of Lake Biwa nourish the mussels that produce Biwa pearls and irrigate some of Japan's most fertile fields. They collected the taxes—which, like the wages of the samurai, were usually paid in rice. But with the opening of Japan to Western influences, in the Meiji era, and the introduction of a money economy, the Moriguchis "suffered a loss of caste," Kunihiko said. Their fortunes were definitively battered by a famine in 1913-14, and Kako was forced to leave school at thirteen and find employment.

According to the family folklore, Moriguchi children tended to be either "sickly" or "exceptional." Kako showed his hardiness in both senses: resistance to disease and an unconquerable self-assurance. The future Living Treasure received the lowest marks in his art class for submitting heretical pictures. Asked to draw a locomotive, he sketched a black triangle flanked by two swaths of yellow and green. "The train left al-

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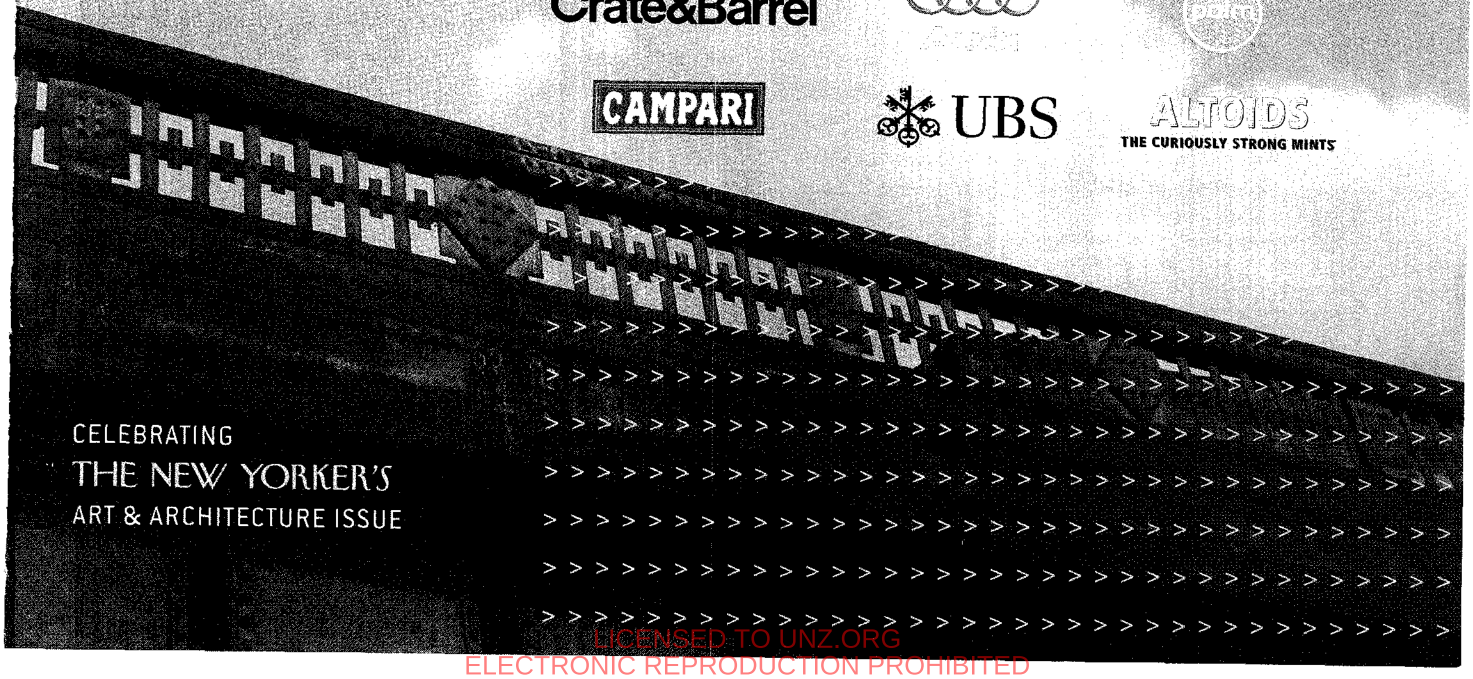

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ready," he said. "The green is spring wheat, and the yellow is rapeseed, on either side of the track." Kako's freehand painting on kimono silk—exuberant plum blossoms, chrysanthemums, and birds in flight—would assert the same defiance of academicism. It reflects nature like a dream, rather than like a mirror.

One of Kako's uncles was a pharmacist in Kyoto, and he took his nephew on as an apprentice. The work was menial, and included washing the windows and hanging flyers for soap, aspirin, or toothpaste, which were supplied by manufacturers. But the paper was of high quality, and Kako used its blank side in lieu of a sketch pad. Sometimes he had the temerity, Moriguchi said, to turn the drawings around with the ad facing in. The uncle made no objection to the use of his shopfront as an impromptu gallery, and his nephew's work attracted the interest of an elderly gentleman who came by every morning.

As in a fairy tale of a penniless changeling recognized by a passing burgher, the old man introduced Kako, by then fifteen, to the *yuzen* painter Kason Nakagawa, who became his master. Moriguchi showed me Nakagawa's picture in an old album: a scowling figure in a fedora too small for his head. Despite appearances, however, he was "an open-minded man," who gave Kako leave to study art in the evenings with Hosho Hikita, a painter and a sage. The master's liberality had its limits, however, because after five years of service, in 1929, when Kako asked Nakagawa for his freedom, the request was denied. He stayed on for another nine years, and was paid well enough (as are Moriguchi's apprentices) to buy a house and, through a matchmaker, arrange his marriage. Masafumi was born in 1937, and Kunihiko in 1941, ten months before Pearl Harbor.

Immediately after the war, Kako supported his family (a daughter, Etsuko, was born in 1946) by painting cherry trees and American eagles on souvenir handkerchiefs and silk bomber jackets, which were popular with the occupation troops. By the fifties, however, the expanding economy had begun to reproduce some of the conditions that favored the heyday of *yuzen* three hundred years earlier: loosened social constraints and a rising middle class avid for luxury goods. "We started to get huge commissions," Moriguchi says. "The merchants and industrialists who made their fortunes supplying war matériel for Korea were good clients. Two years in advance of a wedding, they would order kimonos for all the women in the bridal party. The studio worked from morning to night, and there was another virtue to the nouveaux riches: they always wanted something new. My father was doing some of his most original work."

In 1955, one of Kako's kimonos, speckled with *makinori*, won the grand prize at the first exhibition of "intangible national treasures" organized by the government. The Empress saw the show, and three years later Princess Suga paid an official visit to the Moriguchi studio. The imperial Mercedes blocked traffic in the narrow street, and all of the neighbors turned out to see their monarchs' teen-age daughter, who was attended by a sour-looking duenna and several equerries. "I didn't know much about *yuzen*, and I was curious to see the process," Madame Shimazu told me in Tokyo, in the restaurant of a grand hotel. She is still a beauty at sixty-six, slim and wiry, with cropped hair brushed off her high forehead, though she wears an incongruous braided rattail at the nape. It is perhaps symbolic of a flair for rebellion, since she was the first member of the imperial family to defy protocol and take a paid job—working as a design consultant. She had come from a business meeting, and was dressed simply in a summer pants suit. "I could never get used to wearing kimonos in daily life," she said. "They are too valuable, for one thing, and uncomfortable. My actions and walk change when I wear them, and, like most people, I prefer Western clothes." When an important occasion calls for Japanese dress, she often calls Kunihiko for advice, "but I don't always take it," she added with a laugh. "I wear things the way they suit me." She has no memory of meeting Moriguchi at his father's house. They were introduced formally at the French Embassy, in the late sixties, and have been close friends since. "Kunihiko has something rare," she said, "a sense of balance, and I suspect it derives from his relationship with his father." In a portrait of Madame Shimazu by Hamada Taiji, whose style is reminiscent of David

Hockney's, she poses in profile, with her elegant hands folded in her lap. In homage to Moriguchi—or perhaps just because it suits her—she is wearing one of his kimonos.

While I was in Kyoto, Moriguchi started work on a new commission that was causing him trouble—"Maybe," he suggested with a grin, "because the lady has such long arms"—though beneath his sunny demeanor, which was also a form of politesse, he was finding it hard to concentrate. His older son, Motoharu, had called from Paris, in something of a quandary about his future; his younger son, Hiromitsu, who lives at home, was in an anxious mood and causing both parents concern. "I've probably indulged them," Moriguchi said to me one afternoon. The French Ambassador had just left after a studio visit, and Keiko was reverently refolding the kimonos. "I'm still supporting them while they find themselves. Keiko and I grew up in a different world, and I wanted to be a modern father."

Motoharu and Hiromitsu are bachelors of twenty-nine and twenty-six. According to his father, Motoharu's hobbies are rock music and photography. Hiromitsu is a surfer. But each has entertained the prospect of taking up the family profession. Motoharu left home after high school and lived abroad—mostly in the Hamptons—for eight years. He studied graphic design, and for a while he tried to program his father's work on a computer—which proved to be impossible. Hiromitsu helps in the studio, preparing the *makinori*, but not as an apprentice. "He tried it for two years, though he didn't have the patience for it," Moriguchi said. "He made one or two interesting things, with a lot of help, and won a prize for his art. But everyone was hoping for a third-generation Moriguchi, and the pressure was too great. He could never be sure, he said, that his talent, and not his name, had impressed the judges." Keiko still hopes, however, that at least one of her sons will follow his father. "*Yuzen* is in their DNA," she says.

My last day in Kyoto was a Sunday. The Moriguchis invited me to lunch at Sorin-ji, a Zen temple on the outskirts of the city. It was surrounded by a blighted landscape of strip malls and auto-body shops. "Kyoto is a funny place," Moriguchi said. "The birthplace of *yuzen*—but also of Nintendo." After our meal, we drove up into the northern hills, to Ohara, an idyllic village that is thronged with tourists in foliage season. The nursing home where Kako and Chie Moriguchi live is tucked away at the foot of a mountain, next to a stream, surrounded by deep woods. It is a cheerful modern building with the atmosphere of a spa hotel. When we arrived, about fifty of the residents had gathered for tea in the lobby. Their social director was playing a grand piano, and they were singing what sounded like Stephen Foster songs.

Kako was in his room at the end of a hall. When a nurse announced that his children had come to visit, he found his glasses, bowed to me from his wheelchair, and for a brief moment he embraced all of us with an incandescent smile. Then I went off with Keiko to find her mother-in-law, and to deliver some laundry. Moriguchi stayed with his father for a long time.

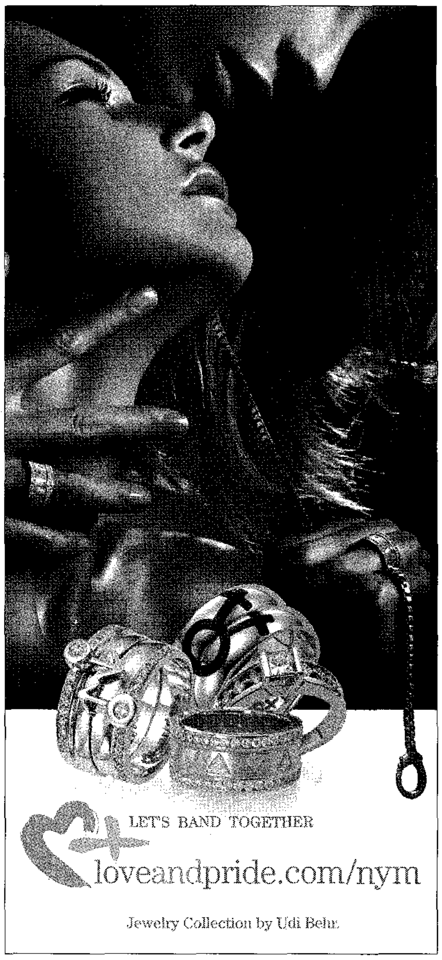
On the drive home, he seemed pensive, and concentrated on the winding road. After a while, almost as if he were thinking aloud, he began speaking about *yuzen*. It needed an infusion of new ideas, and a closer rapport to modern fashion. "I admire the Japanese avant-garde," he said. "They understand what Balthus meant by 'fantasy.' And we have to answer the challenge of modernity: what is a kimono, or what will it become, if it ceases to be a thing worn?"

We said goodbye at my hotel, and I thanked him for the honor of meeting Kako. "How strange it still is," he replied, "to leave my parents up there and drive home without them. Yet I think my father would be happy to know that I feel freer as an artist than I've ever been." ♦

WE DON'T WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT DEPARTMENT

From the Gualala (Calif.) Independent Coast Observer.

On Thursday, September 30, all offices of the Mendocino County Department of Public Health, including the Public Health Lab, Environmental Health, Nursing and AODP offices in Ukiah, Willits and Fort Bragg will close for an all staff disaster.



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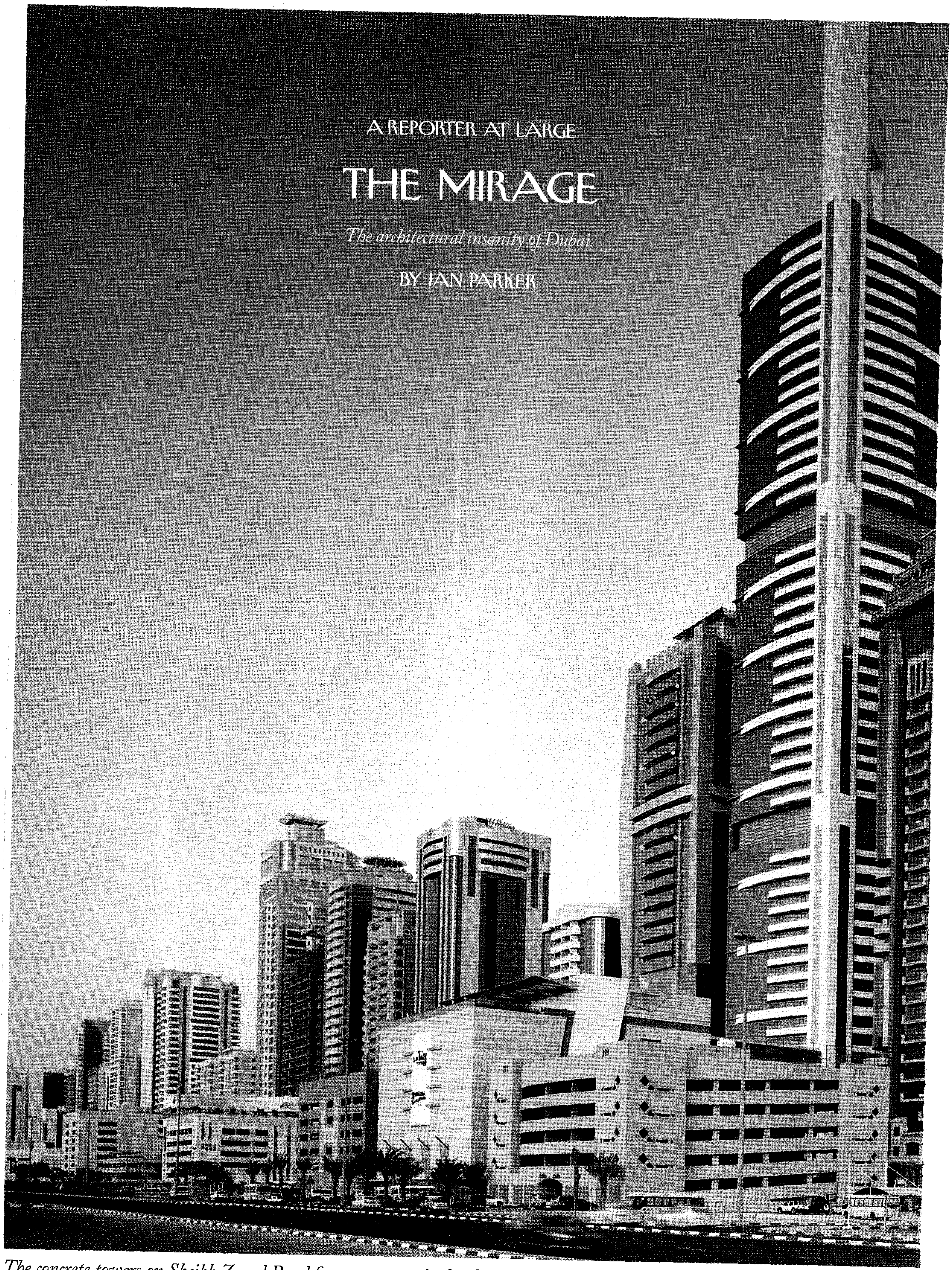
A REPORTER AT LARGE

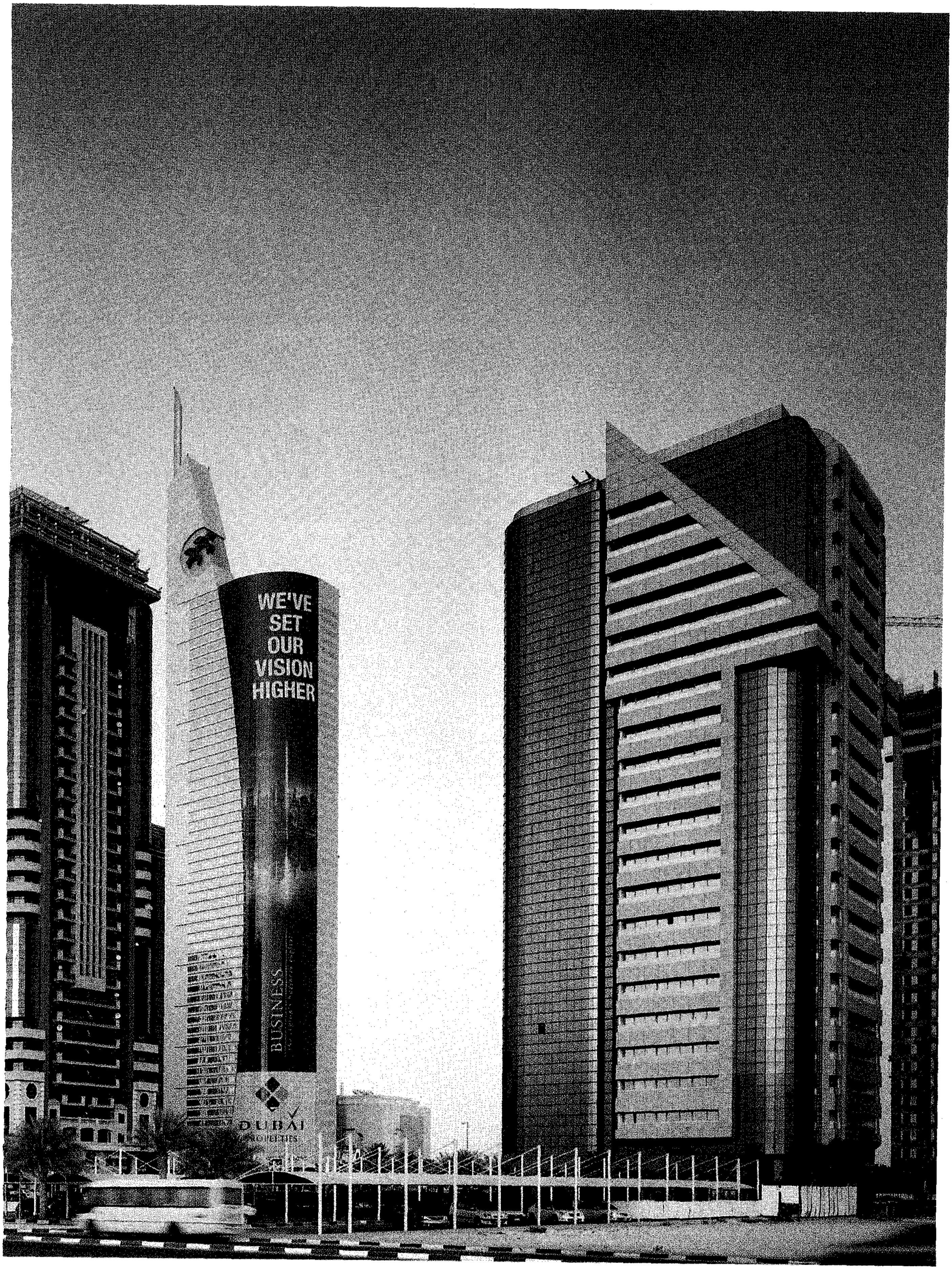
THE MIRAGE

The architectural insanity of Dubai.

BY IAN PARKER



The concrete towers on Sheikh Zayed Road form a one-species landscape: nothing older or shorter stands between them. Where the



WE'VE
SET
OUR
VISION
HIGHER
BUSINESS
DUBAI
PROPERTIES

re no skyscrapers, there is sand, or the start of a future skyscraper. Photographs by Robert Polidori.

When a pan-Arab edition of "The Apprentice" was announced, earlier this year, Mohamed Ali Alabbar was the obvious choice to host it: a suave man of forty-five, he is the founder and chairman of Emaar, a real-estate company valued this spring at twenty-five billion dollars, and the developer of a building that, when finished, will be the tallest in the world. He is also erecting the world's largest shopping mall and, within it, the world's largest aquarium. All these projects will be constructed in his home city of Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, which, under the supervision of Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, has become the place on earth most likely to propose a five-story underwater hotel, or a set of towers in the shape of chess pieces—a city where everything new must be a landmark, and where everything is new.

I met Alabbar one morning in July, on a private plane about to take off from an airport a few miles outside Dubai. He arrived a little late, wearing pale linen trousers from Nordstrom, a pale linen shirt, and black loafers without socks, as if he had just sung a duet with Julio Iglesias. His mustache was trimmed to barely more than a smudge. As he sat down, he talked about his teen-age children, then found a pair of socks in his briefcase and put them on, explaining that he had left his house in a hurry. "There are boom times and there are slow times," he said, speaking English. "And these are the boom times. These are the days we should just push the accelerator to the max. We just have to hold on to this chance with our teeth, our legs, our arms!" He wrestled with the air in front of him.

When the plane took off, a few minutes later, we looked out the window and squinted at a scene that was hazy and bleached; the sky and the sand converged in near-whiteness. "When you see Dubai from the sky, you think, My God, there's so much desert," he said. "There's so much to do, so much to do." We could see, below, a map of a boom—a diagram of hormonally adolescent urban growth. Behind us, flat and uninterrupted desert stretched to the horizon, in the direction of Saudi Arabia. But, about a mile from the sea, with almost no suburban preamble, Dubai announced itself by throwing up a mile-long line of modern skyscrapers thirty, forty, and fifty stories high. (Hidden among them were the foundations of Alabbar's tower of a hundred and sixty stories or so, the Burj Dubai, or Dubai Tower.) The city soon dropped away to a Californian landscape of low-rise villas, and then we were over the beach.

The section of the shoreline that we could see was straight except for three interruptions. One, formed by nature, was the deep-water creek that accounts for Dubai's foundation. The others were modern developments of a kind that symbolize this city-state's new ambitions: man-made islands, each joined to the land by causeways—creeks in reverse. One of these, close to the shore, was fully taken up by the Burj Al Arab hotel, a tall white building shaped like a spinnaker filled with wind—and oriented to suggest a boat on the verge of ramming into the beach. The other island was far larger, covering an area of several square miles, and consisting of seventeen long, thin peninsulas flopping out from a central stalk, to suggest a palm tree (or the cartoon dreadlocks of Sideshow Bob, the "Simpsons" character).

As we flew out to sea, Dubai showed us one more extravagance: five miles offshore, a cluster of small, bare, sandy islands hinted at the pattern they will eventually take—a mosaic map of the world. At the sight of these luxury freehold nations, Alabbar made a face that was just short of an eye roll. "I like to build on the desert," he said. "I don't like to play with nature." He later added that he disliked real-estate "gimmicks," although he wryly excluded from disapproval the thirty-six-foot-high aquarium he is building in his future mall; as it is shown in architectural renderings, the aquarium looms menacingly over shoppers, who look as jaunty as extras at the start of a disaster movie. Mall experts told Alabbar that he needed a defining interior feature, something like the ski slope that is being built nearby (indoors, with real snow). Alabbar's response had been to say, "Fine, a fish tank I can afford."

Alabbar, who was flying with two colleagues to a meeting in Beirut, moved to sit at a table. A flight attendant brought us breakfast, and I asked Alabbar whether he had pressed for any projects that had not yet been realized during Dubai's recent years of expansion. After a pause, he remembered one, from a few years ago. The plan had been to redevelop a large part of old Dubai, the area around the creek, where some low-rise buildings from before the nineteen-eighties survive. "A sunken car park, a two-story retail-and-entertainment complex, all along the creek," he said. "I wanted to rebuild the old town." He had been thwarted at the time. "Since you ask me, maybe we should go back and look at that again," he added. He wrote in a black notebook, "CREEK WATERFRONT PROJECT," much in the way another person might write, "Two pints skim milk."

The plane left Dubai behind, and Alabbar talked of Sheikh Mohammed, whose role in the commercial life of Dubai can sometimes cause a man such as Alabbar to seem more like an entrepreneurial civil servant than like a run-of-the-mill Western billionaire. Alabbar's tone was that of a grateful younger brother. "I'm not—excuse me—licking ass, but the Sheikh taught us to be daring," he said. "This guy is beyond belief. He calls you every day. He says, 'Where is the crane? Show me the crane!' "

To see Dubai is to experience a kind of futurized present: the borders between what exists today and what might turn up tomorrow feel oddly blurred. When I visited this summer, every newspaper was full of images of unbuilt buildings as well as breathless advertisements for "dazzling," "sumptuous," and technologically advanced apartments. ("Discover the wonders of virtual parenting—pamper your kids from miles away. Remote home control all the way. At the speed of light!") My street map showed a would-be Dubai—including the archipelago to be known as the World, three palm-tree-shaped islands, and a hundred-square-mile area called Dubailand, the city's gargantuan answer to Disney World. (These were marked with the seemingly apologetic designation "u/c"—"under construction.") Similarly, when I asked Alabbar to pinpoint Dubai's present downtown—the city is expanding so fast that its center of gravity is a matter for debate—he said that it was now "the area of the Burj Dubai and the Financial

Center," a reference to two major urban developments that are still years from completion.

Dubai is an advertisement for a city, as much as a city itself: in its freezing malls, prime floor space is given over to large scale models of landmarks to come—giant assemblies of plastic and plaster, accessorized with tiny cars and leisured figurines in Western dress. One day at lunchtime, I watched as two bored young women idly tugged at a half-inch model of a sunbathing man, then snapped him away from his spot on the beach and carried out a small-scale relocation—laying him face down, far out in a vibrantly blue sea.

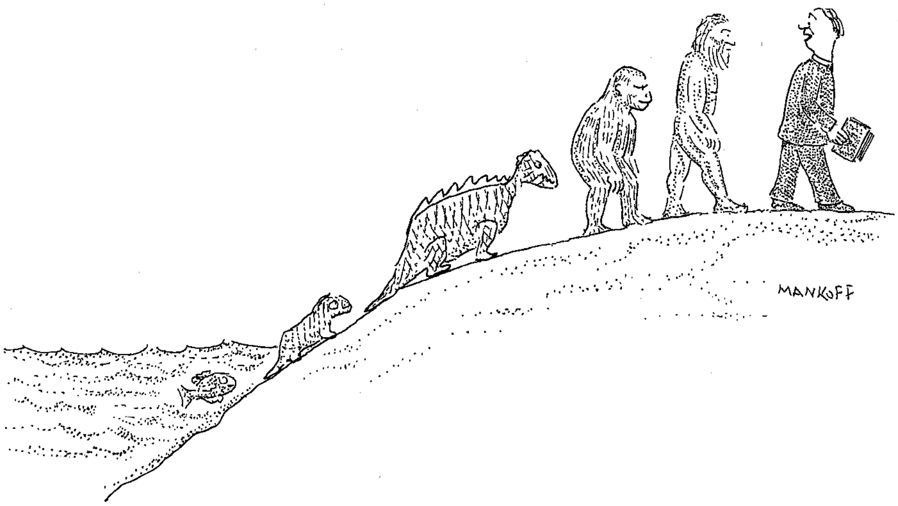
I was staying on Sheikh Zayed Road, the main route out of the city in the direction of Abu Dhabi (and, beyond that, Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait), a road that runs southwest, parallel to the coast. Sheikh Zayed Road has a special resonance in Dubai. When a resident talks to a visitor, the resident is likely to refer to a locally famous photograph, usually dated 1990, that depicts this road as a seemingly tranquil thoroughfare, with trees planted down the center. To one side, there are four apartment buildings about fifteen stories high; there is a building or two in the distance. The rest is desert. Jeep tracks crisscross the sand.

I was told that the photograph is more accurately dated about ten years earlier than is typically claimed. (The exaggeration seems to be born of Dubai's dominant mood of pride mixed with unease—the feeling one would have if a zucchini growing in one's garden unexpectedly reached record-breaking size.) But, even allowing for the error, the photograph still startles. Much of Sheikh Zayed Road is now a ten-lane highway; a photograph taken at the same spot today would show a mile of skyscrapers—the ones I had seen from the air. Dozens of concrete towers, mostly clad in white stone and blue-green glass, variously spiked and sculpted and blinking at their tops, stand just one deep on both sides of the road, giving the impression of an American downtown stretched out—Houston unspooled. Most look neither quite residential nor quite commercial. They are, in fact, mostly hotels and apartment towers, but they rarely have balconies, or any other external sign that there is domestic space inside—which one could read as a response to heat and sandstorms or as a sign of haste and hedged bets. (Not long ago, a Dubai building that began construction as an office block had become a Hilton hotel by the time it was finished.) The Sheikh Zayed Road towers exist in a one-species landscape; nothing older or shorter stands between them. Where there are no skyscrapers, there is sand, or the start of a future skyscraper.

At the end of this line of buildings is Alabbar's emerging Burj Dubai complex—consisting of, among other things, the tower, an artificial lake, a mall, and a swath of low- and medium-rise housing, dressed in parapets and pergolas, which will be known as Old Town (distinct from Dubai's actual old town, some miles away). It is hidden behind photographic billboards that show the life to come: young white people jamming chopsticks into each other's mouths while laughing at the greatest joke ever told. When I looked out at the site from a nearby hotel, it crossed my mind that I could walk to it. But Sheikh Zayed Road protects itself from pedestrians with high fences and little yellow sports cars driven at a hundred miles an hour by carefree Emirati men wearing white dishdashas and baseball caps. Like much in Dubai, where almost every new development is described as a "city within a city," Sheikh Zayed Road itself is strikingly unintegrated. The highway has become a wall across the city: a kind of round-the-clock mugging of Jane Jacobs. It's as if Fifth Avenue had been allowed to evolve into the Long Island Expressway. To reach the Burj Dubai, then, I took a taxi, which—following the only sensible route—first had to drive directly away from Sheikh Zayed Road, into a traffic jam. The taxi then had to make a U-turn at a stoplight and drive into another traffic jam. Another stoplight allowed us onto a roundabout above Sheikh Zayed Road, and from there we reached the Burj Dubai. The journey took twenty minutes.

In the center of a vast pit of sand, above foundations that burrow a hundred and fifty feet deep (but never touch rock), the Burj Dubai was beginning to rise, with an unnervingly small tripod footprint. The thousands of construction workers at the site, most of them from South Asia, must contend with average summer high temperatures of 104 degrees Fahrenheit. As is common in Dubai, construction here continues through the night, under bright lights; Mohamed Ali Alabbar often visits after dinner, on his way home. "I just take a look for a second, see the lights, just check my baby," he said.

In 2003, Emaar held an invitation-only architectural competition for the design of the tower. Such events are unusual in Dubai—they are considered languid indulgences. Five international firms submitted proposals. After an adjudication overseen by Sheikh Mohammed, the winner was Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, the long-established Ameri-



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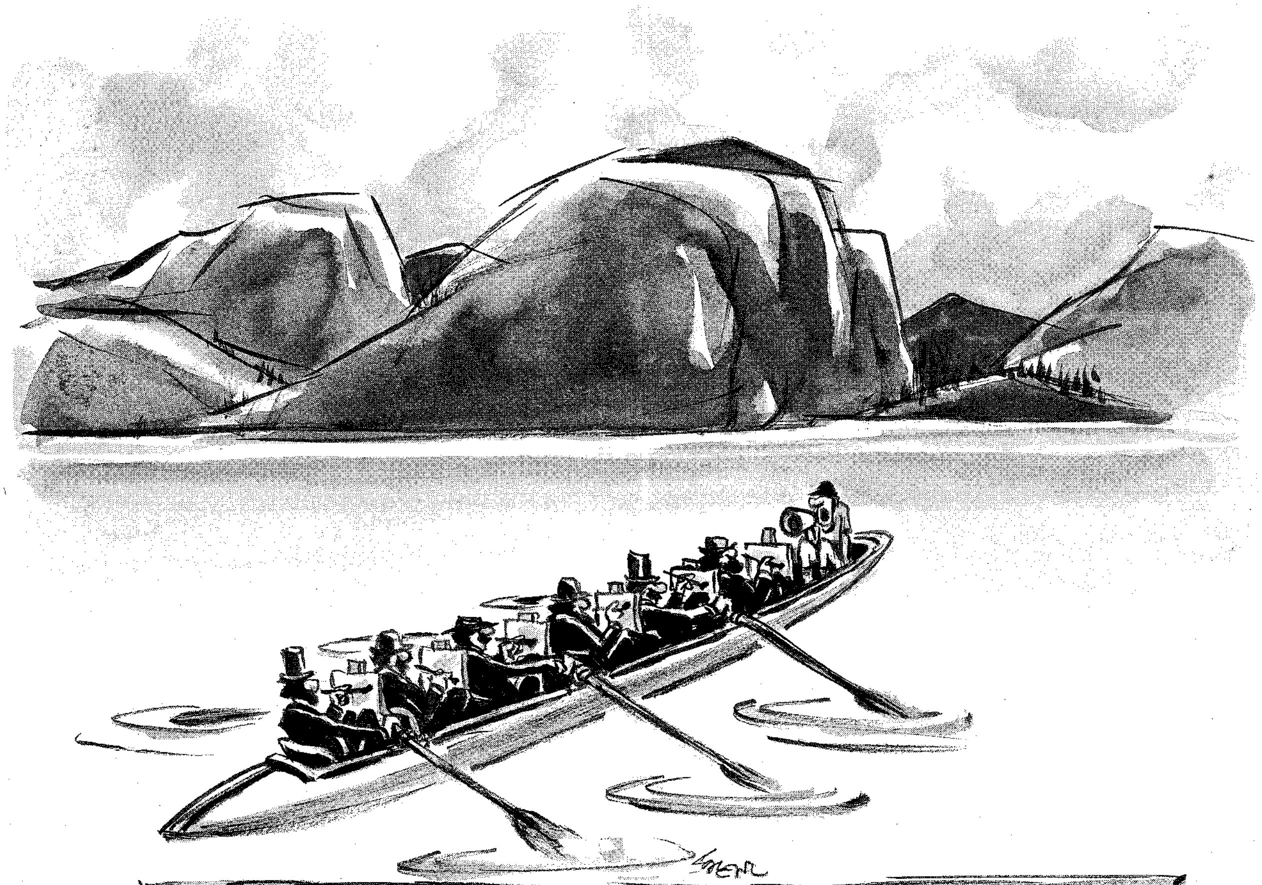


THE HUDSON RIVER SCHOOL TAKES A WORKING VACATION.

• •

can skyscraper specialists, which envisaged a slender and silvery tower formed of a three-pronged base, with elliptical cylinders rising in an ascending spiral around a central core—looking something like the cigarettes that invitingly poke out of a pack in an old magazine advertisement, except stretched to half a mile in height. The plan is for the tower to have an Armani-run hotel on its lower floors, and a hundred and twelve floors of apartments. Above that, there will be fifty or so floors of office space. Alabbar described the losing designs as "very bulky and thick." He wanted the Burj to have both modernity and warmth, to be "slick, but warm slick."

An old military warehouse on the construction site has been converted into a showroom. Its floors are as highly polished as any in Dubai, where the act of sweeping sand from spotless marble has the air of a national penance. Inside, Robert Booth, a Canadian, who is the executive director of Emaar, led me past enlarged photographs of the Great Pyramid, the Eiffel Tower, the Empire State Building, and then the Burj, which looked surprisingly confident in this company. Booth explained to me that the tower was being positioned so that a straight line could be drawn between it and Sheikh Zayed Road's best-known landmarks: the Emirates Towers, a sleek pair of white Toblerone boxes that were finished in 2000, and the World Trade Centre, built twenty years earlier. A line of sight would connect them all in the style of Paris's city plan. However, if one looks at a map it is immediately obvious that the line formed by the towers is quite crooked. I asked Booth about this, and he admitted, in a good-humored way, "We *tried* to line them up." He then noted that the tower's footprint evokes the shape of a desert flower, allowing him unironically to describe the building—the tallest in the world, in a desert—as an example of "contextual architecture." When I later spoke to Adrian Smith, the tower's chief architect, he acknowledged, laughing, that the desert-flower conceit had come to him after he designed the three-petal base, not before. "I don't know if it's kitschy or not," he said. "Call it marketing." (The tower's promotional literature includes a photograph of a six-petalled spider lily—a plant native to the Americas, and found in Dubai only where cultivated.)

A drawing in the showroom pictured the Burj Dubai in outline, looming over the Taipei 101, in Taiwan (1,671 feet), and the Petronas Towers (1,483 feet), in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Burj Dubai's projected height was not given, however; the fear is that another company might make a spoiler announcement of a slightly taller building. The actual figure remains a company secret. As further insurance, the building can be made taller during construction, if necessary.

Still, an apparent hint was given in a mockup of a Burj Dubai elevator to which Booth led me: the top button served an imagined hundred-and-eighty-ninth floor. ("That's a little much," Smith later told me.) The pretend elevator made a door-closing sound—Dubai's pleasures often involve this kind of child-like play. After we heard the sound of a door opening, we walked down a corridor decorated with pseudo-Regency striped wallpaper, and into a simulacrum of a luxurious apartment. On an imagined seventy-second floor, an Eames leather armchair looked out through a fake window, over a panoramic view of fake ocean.

Mohamed Ali Alabbar grew up in a household whose poverty would be hard for a modern child of the United Arab Emirates to imagine. In the first years of his life, his family home had no electricity or running water. His father, a ship's captain, who left his mother soon after Alabbar was born, could not read or write—and still cannot, although, after a lifetime of trade and travel in the Persian Gulf and beyond, he speaks three foreign languages.

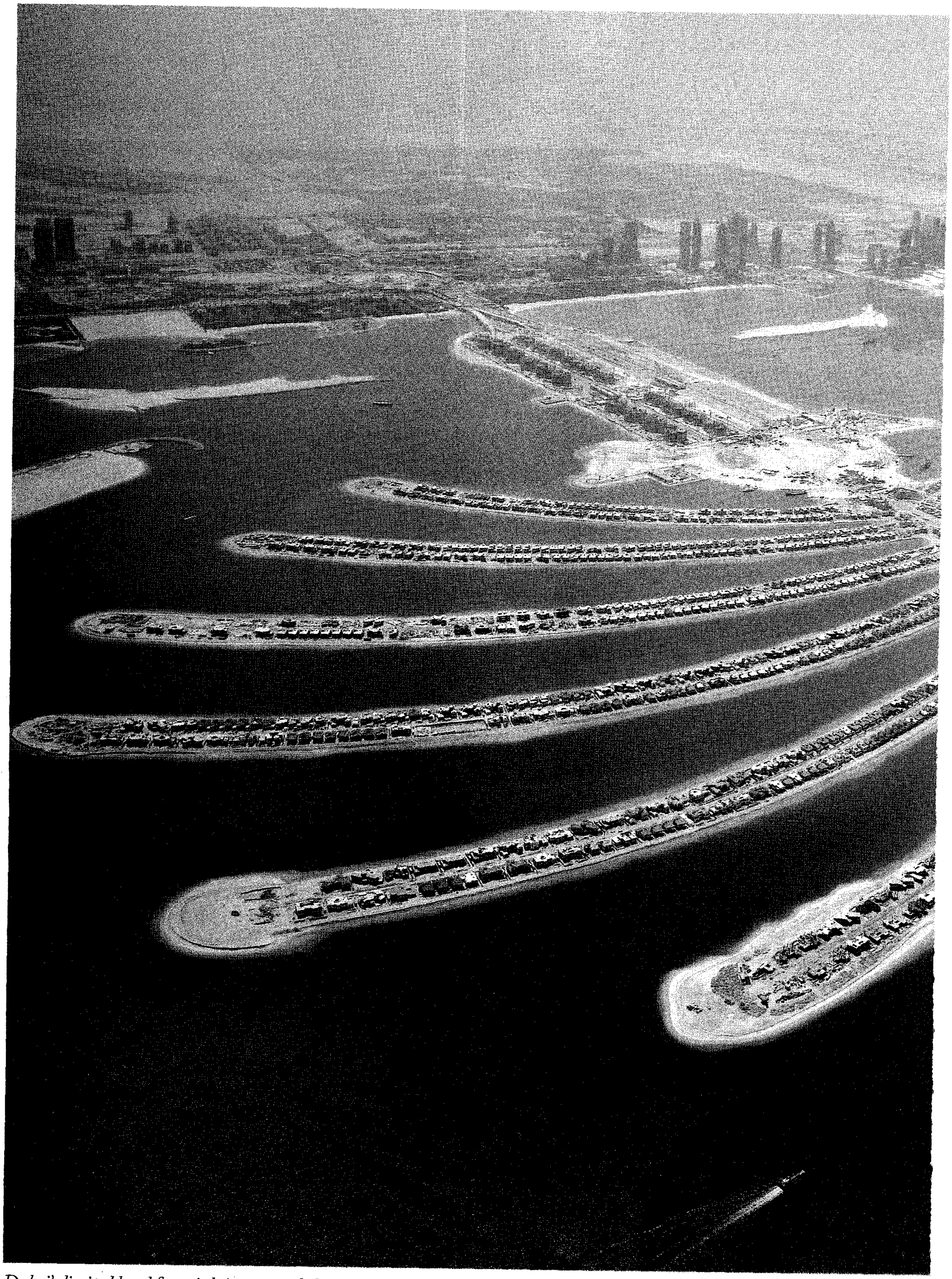
For centuries, Dubai was known as a small trading and pearl-diving port with a cosmopolitan flavor. It fell under British influence in the early nineteenth century and later became a protectorate. In the nineteen-forties and fifties, Wilfred Thesiger, the late British travel writer, journeyed widely in the Arabian Peninsula, and in his book "Arabian Sands" he generalized about those he met: "Ascetic by nature, they derive satisfaction from the bare simplicity of their lives and scorn the amenities which others would judge essential." In the Dubai Museum, artifacts from the emirate's early days are displayed in baking-hot rooms, without explanatory dates or details. (Thus, a leather cartridge belt with spaces for twenty-one bullets is captioned, "Leather cartridge belt with spaces for twenty-one bullets.") The museum is air-conditioned only in the rooms documenting the story of Dubai after oil began flowing in commercial quantities, in the nineteen-sixties.

In 1971, Dubai became one of seven members of a federal United Arab Emirates. Sheikh Zayed Ibn Sultan al-Nuhayyan, the ruler of Abu Dhabi, Dubai's neighbor and the largest emirate, became President, while Dubai's ruler, Sheikh Rashid Ibn Said al-Maktoum, became Vice-President. In the seventies, oil production rose as global oil prices increased tenfold—to the country's spectacular advantage. Dubai, however, was not the center of the U.A.E. oil industry—that was Abu Dhabi—and it compensated by building on its already laissez-faire economic traditions. The emirate, which collects no income tax, welcomed expatriate workers and invested in infrastructure: a dry-dock and, in 1976, the world's largest man-made harbor, thirty miles from the creek. Dubai International Airport was expanded on a scale that seemed preposterous at the time, and, if for nothing else, the city soon became renowned as a glittering duty-free mall stumbled upon during 3 A.M. stopovers between East and West.

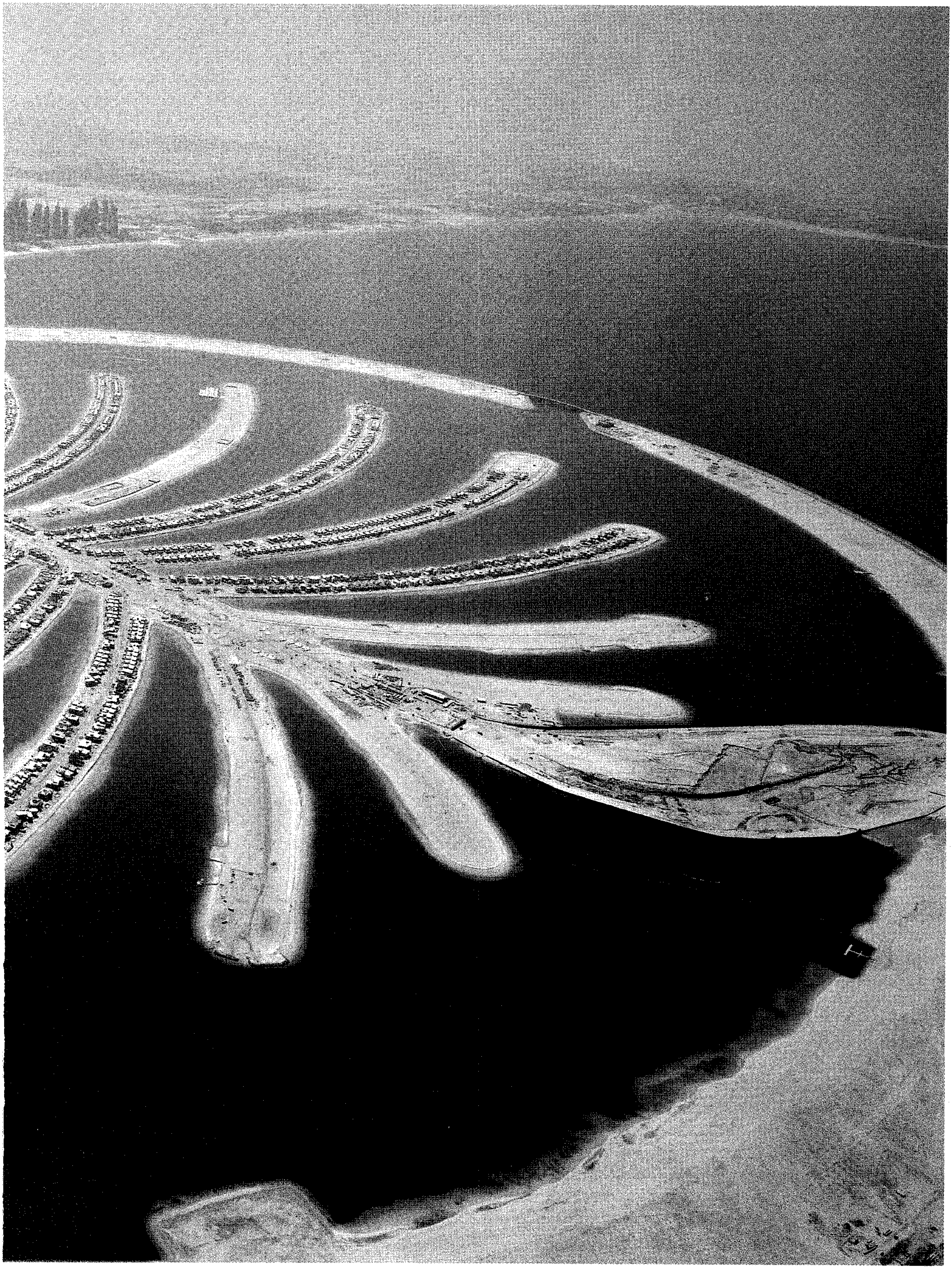
Sheikh Rashid died in 1990, and he was succeeded by his eldest son, Sheikh Maktoum. A few years later, most of Maktoum's power was transferred to his brother, Sheikh Mohammed, in a move that seems to have been less like a putsch and more like the polite giving up of a seat in a theatre. A bearded, stern-faced man, Sheikh Mohammed trained at a military academy in England: Alabbar described him to me as "very strict, disciplined." Sheikh Mohammed—or Sheikh Mo, as I heard a young British-Syrian expatriate call him—drives around town in a Mercedes G500 S.U.V. with the license plate "1." He has an international reputation in the sport of endurance racing—seventy-mile horse-riding marathons in the desert—and he writes poetry. His literary work includes panegyrics to U.A.E. notables, as well as a body of more plaintive verse, centering on the themes of love, rain, and perfumed breezes. As if to provoke unpublished poets everywhere, one royal verse is about to show up in a form so prominent that it will be visible from ten thousand feet. Dubai's first palm-tree-shaped island, the Palm Jumeirah, which is now nearly finished, so caught the local imagination that it has become a kind of vernacular—two more iterations of the form are now pressing their way into the ocean. The second Palm development will be surrounded by an outer ring of luxury villas, built on stilts over the water. Seen from above, these homes will take the shape of Arabic letters, spelling out two lines of the Sheikh's unblushing poetry: "Take wisdom from the wise / Not everyone who rides a horse is a great jockey / It takes a man of great vision to write on water / Great men rise to great challenges." All the homes are already sold.

One evening, Alabbar told me that Sheikh Mohammed "wants it all" for Dubai. "He wants success, he wants glamour, he wants education, he wants low crime, he wants an industrial sector, he wants a technology sector," he said. After Sheikh Mohammed took control of the city, the expansion begun by his father accelerated, with an emphasis on building spectacular landmarks that heated up the real-estate market while enhancing the hub appeal of the city, attracting tourists, banks, and the regional offices of multinational corporations. The plan essentially was to make a Singapore out of the building blocks of Las Vegas, and business did indeed come: companies such as Microsoft and CNN established regional headquarters in Dubai. The process was facilitated by the abundance of empty land, much of which the government presumed to own. Sheikh Mohammed parcelled out desert to a few ambitious lieutenants—most of them born into privilege, unlike Alabbar—whose task, in Alabbar's understanding, was to "do something that makes His Highness proud that one of his boys has done the right thing."

Around this time, Alabbar, who had graduated from the University of Seattle after receiving a scholarship, was managing Dubai government investments in Singapore. Returning home in 1992, he ran the emirate's Department of Economic Development, introducing the Dubai Shopping Festival, which was rather like launching a swimming promotion in a community of fish. In 1997, with Sheikh Mohammed's blessing, Emaar, a public joint-stock company, was formed, with Alabbar as its chairman. In a subsequent deal with the government, Emaar exchanged twenty per cent of its stock for a square mile of coastal land. The Dubai Marina is now being built there. Dubai's other large-



Dubai's limited beachfront is being expanded with enormous artificial islands, such as the Palm Jumeirah; the seventeen peninsulas—



fronds"—are made with dredged sand dropped onto the seafloor, with a precision allowed only by G.P.S. technology.

scale development entities remained fully owned by the government, although, over time, their offices took the form of branded companies, to give a corporate sheen to a system that has aspects of Renaissance patronage.

"Whatever I presented to the Sheikh, he said to make it bigger," Farhan Faraidooni, a prominent Dubai government architect, said when I visited him recently in his office, in the Emirates Towers. A fairly large man, he wore an Arabic headdress and Birkenstock sandals. Near his desk were a number of mounted satellite photographs—a common decoration in Dubai, which, like a person writing a lover's name in giant letters on a beach, is smitten with the idea of its own aerial legibility. But an image captioned "satellite photograph" often turns out to be a computer-generated guess at a future satellite photograph; in Dubai, no great effort is made to distinguish between the two.

"The problem with real-estate investment is it's a long-term business," Faraidooni said. "But, if you can make it quick, you win." Dubai learned to put up buildings on an imperial scale, and to do it fast. Developers had no patience for European and American planning methods, which required an extended back-and-forth between clients and engineers and architects before anything could be announced. "Here in Dubai, we upside-downed the whole thing," Faraidooni told me, delightedly. A "tangible vision" for a development would be very quickly sketched out and publicly announced. Only then, Faraidooni said, would he bring in "a master planner to validate the vision from an architectural and engineering point of view, and to massage it a bit." He recalled the design process for the Jumeirah Beach Residence, a barricade of thirty-six apartment towers, now under construction: "I got a phone call from my boss, who got it from his boss—His Highness. 'We need to do something with this land, we need to build high-rises.' That was enough for me. In ten days, we had a master plan, we had visuals."

Similarly, Faraidooni told me that he had sketched out Dubailand—a five-billion-dollar development that will be three times the size of Manhattan—in two weeks, in 2003. As of yet, little of Dubailand exists except for a ring road of fresh black tarmac that encircles nothing; intersections on the left and the right lead directly into sand dunes, and a premature sign points to V.I.P. parking. But those who have faith in Dubai's continuing ability to convert ambition into finished structures expect to see more than two hundred development zones emerge in Dubailand in the coming years, including Eco-Tourism World, Sports & Outdoor World, Auction World, Virtual Games World, and Themed Leisure & Vacation World, which may feature life-size replicas of the Taj Mahal and the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. It's as if a list of all known human pastimes had been collected on PowerPoint slides and then casually voted on by a show of hands.

I asked Faraidooni if it was ever frustrating to design so much so quickly. "We are so lucky," he said. In other places, he added, "you'll find architects with thirty years of experience who have dealt only with a couple of high-rise buildings." In Dubai, the architect who has worked on no high-rises can scarcely be imagined.

It can sometimes seem as though Dubai thought of a building as a wantonly heavy version of a scale model. A construction in Dubai may be said to assume its most natural form as an animated, swooping "fly through" representation on DVD. In truth, many developments make it no further than that. These failed adventures are rarely formally cancelled—so that the vision-makers "don't suffer the embarrassment of saying something didn't work," as a young American working for the Dubai government told me—but, over time, it can become clear that a building will forever remain a pixellated fantasy. (One wonders if this will be the fate of a billion-dollar Rotating City, and that of a Crystal Dome, which, its developers claimed, would generate a three-mile-high artificial tornado above it, to suck down cool air.) As Faraidooni put it, "The boring part is the construction."

After a day or two in Dubai, I realized that I hadn't seen any old people. Dubai has the demographics of a frontier mining town: the population is seventy-five per cent male, and, overwhelmingly, of working age. These imbalances derive mainly from Dubai's dependence on foreign labor. Dubai nationals make up only a fifth of the population of about one million, while about half its people are from the Indian subcontinent. Most of these are men, and although there are professionals among them, most are employed in semi-skilled and unskilled jobs, including construction, which do not entitle them to stay in the country beyond retirement age. ("It's 'Logan's Run,' " James Mullan, a longtime Irish resident, joked to me.) Nor may these workers be joined by their families. The risk of arbitrary deportation hangs over them—a threat that may be deduced from the restraint shown by Indian taxi-drivers when provoked by ill-mannered Emirati drivers. Another resident distilled the prevailing ethos: "You are here to make money. If you make trouble, you can fuck off."

The men who are building the new Dubai often earn less than two hundred dollars a month, which situates them in an economic zone far removed from that of an Emirati citizen or a white-collar expatriate. The income disparity is the same as that between an American wage earner and an outsourced worker in the developing world. In Dubai, however, the outsourced worker is invited in—he is in-sourced—then driven by school bus each day between out-of-town barracks and the site of a future landmark.

The invitation that Dubai sends out to professionals—to British airline pilots and German bankers—is quite different. These favored expatriates buy or rent apartments in the glass-plated towers on Sheikh Zayed Road, or find homes in the generously named developments that Emaar has built in the otherwise featureless desert: the Lakes, the Springs, the Meadows. In these neighborhoods, lawns are perpetually misted by sprinklers, and babies squint into the sun as they are wheeled along brand-new sidewalks by young Sri Lankan nannies. "We live in wonderland," Rola Zaarour, a young Lebanese-Canadian woman, told me. Zaarour, who is single and works in public relations, has a red convertible and describes herself, smilingly, as "shallow." She came to Dubai three years ago, and admitted that she had never seen most of the city's old downtown, where the streets narrow to create a souk-like atmosphere, and where Indian and Pakistani workers, on their days off, shop for the radios and alarm clocks that they will one day carry home. "I didn't come to Dubai for anything 'real,'" she said. "I've already lived in real places." For expatriates such as Zaarour, Dubai is a sweetly scented and inarguably dynamic dictatorship, a place of media censorship and restricted Internet access, a politically cowed working class, low crime, dismal jails, extremely good restaurants, and prostitution so blatant that it hints at official tolerance. Young women from China and Ukraine can be seen streetwalking, and they congregate in a number of hotel night clubs. "Hookers, they're bloody everywhere," Louise Sowerby, a young British real-estate saleswoman, told me. "I had a fight with one in Boudoir," she said, referring to a popular lounge. "We had a punch-up in the middle of the dance floor."

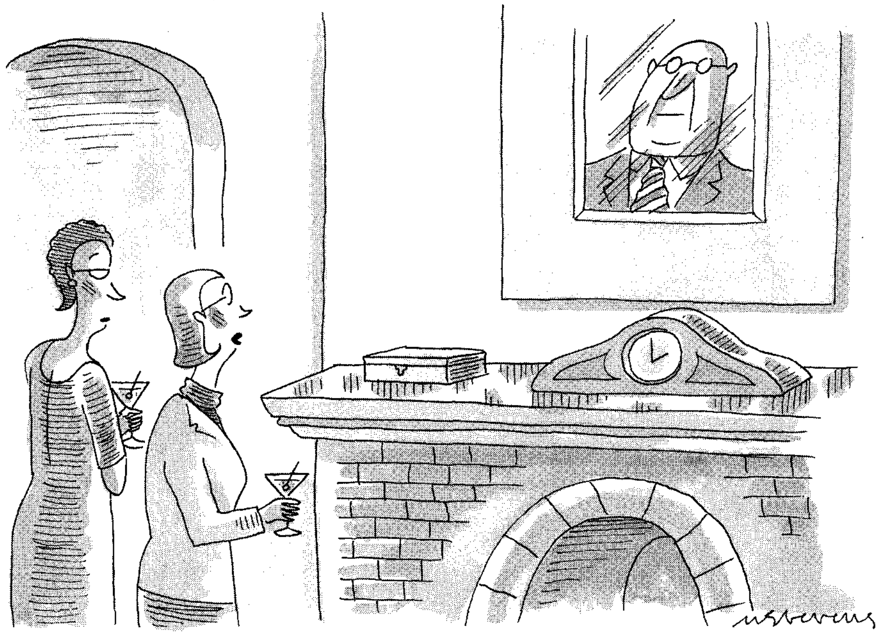
The expatriates share this Dubai with weekend visitors who come from Russia, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. (A Dubai blogger, who asked for anonymity, told me tales of "Saudi shopping-and-shagging holidays.") In addition, the city fills with package vacationers who gamely sunbathe in the hundred-degree heat. Six hundred and fifty thousand British tourists visited the U.A.E. last year. The Dubai economy sometimes appears to be built on a northern-European reluctance to believe, when booking a holiday, that there could be such a thing as too much heat.

The symbolic heart of tourist Dubai is the Burj Al Arab, the sail-shaped luxury hotel, whose standard room—a duplex with a mirror on the bedroom ceiling—costs about a thousand dollars a night. Completed in 1999, with a billowing façade of Teflon-coated woven-glass fibre, the hotel is now reproduced throughout the city on license plates and tourist trinkets. Its officially recognized architect is Tom Wright, of the British firm W. S. Atkins, although Carlos Ott, a Uruguayan architect, who has built extensively in Dubai, told me that he drew up the fundamentals of the hotel's design—an island, a sail—in two weeks, then presented them to Sheikh Mohammed's office. ("That's news to us," a spokesperson for Atkins said. "It's a unique Tom Wright design.") Visitors to the Burj Al Arab must pass through a guardhouse that discourages run-of-the-mill sightseers from reaching even the short, curved causeway that leads from the shore to the island. When I was there, three or four white Rolls-Royces, the hotel's taxis, were parked in front of the main entrance. Guests can also choose to take a thirty-three-hundred-dollar, five-minute helicopter ride from the airport. The helipad was above me: seven hundred feet up, it is a disk protruding from the front of the hotel. Earlier this year, Roger Federer and Andre Agassi played a vertiginous and photogenic set of public-relations tennis on the helipad; netting protected the players from a possible fall.

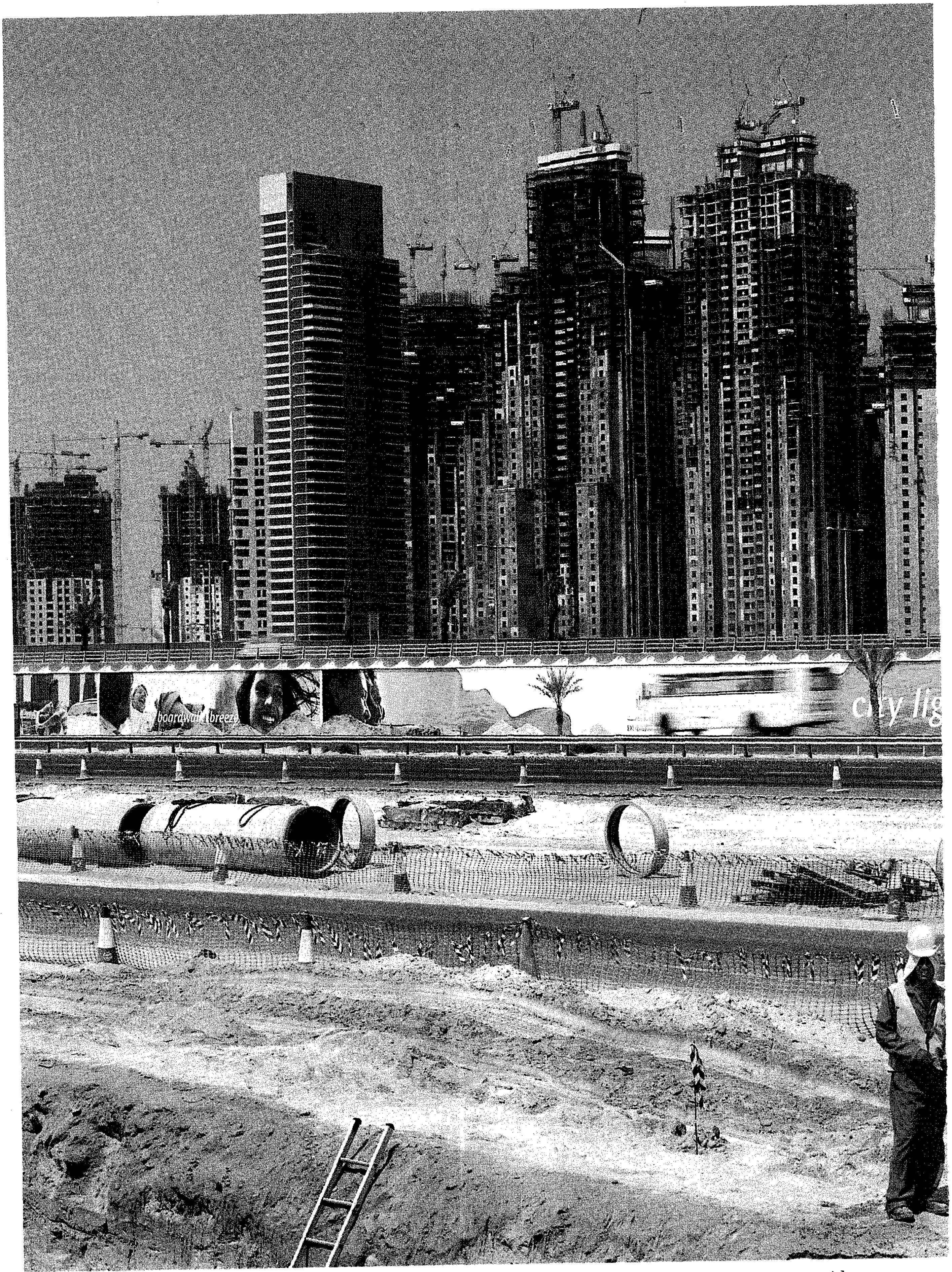
The Burj Al Arab is widely known as the world's first "seven-star" hotel, although no rating system has such a category. (The hotel has never claimed more than five stars, I was told, but it does not correct the mistake when it is repeated by ABC News, the BBC, and other media.) Its interior is insistently lush, noisily yoking together classical and modern motifs in competing patterns of gold, green, blue, and red. The space is uninhibited in its efforts to arouse its users; vast and frankly vaginal sculptural forms decorate the ceiling of the lower lobby, and nearby a fountain pumps water in synchronized spurts.

Dubai hotels are licensed to serve alcohol to non-Muslims. The Burj Al Arab's main bar is a long, flat box cantilevered out from the hotel, high above the ocean, with floor-to-ceiling windows. I had a drink there with John Alexander Smith, a Scottish-born architect who teaches at the American University in Dubai. Smith has a grudging admiration for the hotel; he even once stayed here with his wife, an Iranian architect, to celebrate a wedding anniversary. "The building is amazing," he said, with only partial amazement. "It broke quite a few conventions. A little island, a causeway, a triangular-plan building. In terms of sheer visual audacity, it was the right building at the right time."

A white grand piano stood beneath a multicolored ceiling reminiscent of the disco floor in "Saturday Night Fever." On each table, a red-leafed anthurium had been placed in a glass vase. "It looks fake, but isn't!" our waitress, formally dressed in a white shirt and a long waistcoat, said of the flower. Around us, perfumed Russian and British women spoke softly with their husbands; when the couples stood up to admire the view, they took tentative, self-conscious steps. We all drank in the awkward, sippy way that twenty-dollar margaritas seem to demand, returning glasses to the very center of our coasters. From one end of the room, we could see the towers around Emaar's Dubai Marina, and, beyond, the many towers of Faraidooni's Jumeirah Beach Residence. They were being built in the usual local way; that is, from concrete rather than steel, with central-air-conditioning systems, and with façades of glass and stone. Smith noted that Dubai has failed to court the world's best ar-



"That's Karl, before he was purchased by the Chinese."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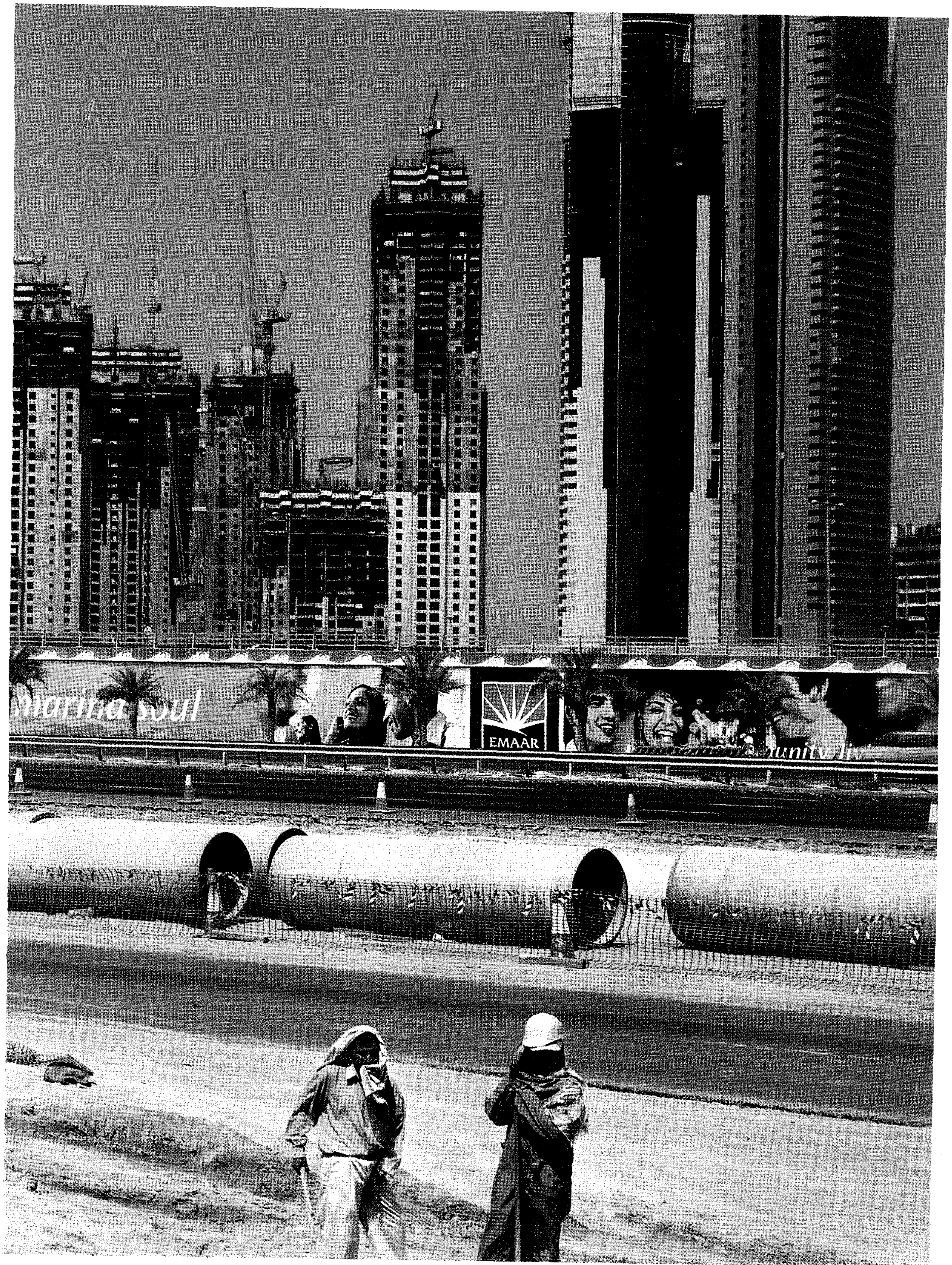
In Dubai, construction workers—almost all of whom are foreign laborers from South Asia, without permanent-resident status—mu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"Have you ever been young before?"

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chitects. "I'm worried that architects might be frightened off," he said—frightened by the lowly status that architects have in the development process. "Architects are historically not recognized in the Middle East," he said. "The person who is recognized as a professional is the engineer. The architects end up being sort of building stylists."

Smith was also worried that Dubai is ecologically unsustainable. He is particularly frustrated that the emirate has made little effort to borrow air-cooling lessons from traditional regional architectural forms, such as wind towers, oversized chimneys that act as chimneys in reverse, sucking down and amplifying any breath of wind; they appear only as decorations on new developments. While I was in Dubai, I went to an early-evening meeting of the U.A.E.'s recently formed Green Building Council, held in the Grand Hyatt. I pushed open high double doors, and walked into a ballroom with a thirty-foot ceiling and multiple chandeliers, each with a hundred light bulbs. The outdoor temperature was more than a hundred degrees, but the air inside was almost uncomfortably cool. Although the room could easily have held a cocktail party for a thousand people, only twenty or so attended the meeting.

The environmental profligacy of Dubai is today most proudly expressed in the forthcoming indoor ski slope that is the defining feature of the new Mall of the Emirates. Encased inside a broad flattened tube that is visible for miles, it will be twelve hundred feet long: a steep, "black diamond" run of nine hundred feet, a forty-degree bend, then a gentler slope to the bottom. I went there before the refrigeration had begun; the snow-making machines had not yet been turned on. "Obviously, it's going to be freezing here and a hundred and twenty degrees outside, so we're going to be using a fair amount of electricity," Phil Taylor, the chief executive of Ski Dubai, which is building the slope, told me. We were standing at the halfway point, looking at scores of workers spread out over the curved and sloping baby-blue interior. Taylor was wondering how his Arab customers will cope with the public humiliation involved in learning to ski. "It might be tricky having guys falling over, looking bad in front of their wives, their friends," he said.

The ski center is to be adjoined by a hotel. The living rooms in some duplexes will have views not of the Gulf but of the lower part of the ski slope. "First, we need sixty centimetres of snow," Taylor said. "Once we put the snow down, then we'll put in alpine trees and rocky outcrops." We walked back down to the level of the desert, passing a Swiss chalet where, soon, tourists, fully dressed in hats, gloves, and down coats, will drink après-ski hot chocolate.

"There is everything in ample quantities in Dubai except beach," Imad Haffar, a Lebanese-Canadian, who is the research-and-development manager of Nakheel, the government-owned developer of the Palm islands and the World, told me. Haffar works to minimize the environmental impact of the company's ocean projects. Dubai has some forty miles of natural beachfront, and, if all the planned developments are finished, it will have four hundred miles—that is, if "beachfront" can properly describe the plots on the fronds of a Palm, which face narrow inlets, not open sea. Dubai is not an obvious beach destination: its jellyfish sometimes sting; the ocean can look green and cloudy; the water is hot, and slippery with salt. (And it is gradually becoming saltier, in part because desalination plants that supply Dubai's drinking water send the extracted salt back to sea.) Moreover, summer temperatures are so brutal that, starting each May, most of Dubai's fancier hotels feel obliged to chill their swimming pools. Earlier this year, Versace announced a future resort in Dubai whose beach would, by some means, be maintained at seventy-two degrees.

Dubai beach is being sold in the way that suburban back yards were sold in postwar America: a onetime luxury turned everyday entitlement. The idea of a Dubai beach, if not its reality, is at the heart of the city's real-estate boom, which, in May, 2002, was given new force when Sheikh Mohammed decreed that foreigners would henceforth be entitled to buy freehold property in some areas of the city. In addition, these property owners would be entitled to Dubai residency. The decree seemed to contradict U.A.E. law, but, a few months after the announcement, when the first villas on the Palm went on the market, they reportedly sold within forty-eight hours. (The villas—as many as two hundred per frond—cost up to $1.2 million each.)

A few months later, the *Gulf News* and the *Khaleej Times* reported, in almost identically worded stories, that eleven members of the English national soccer squad, including David Beckham, had bought Palm villas after passing through Dubai on their way to the World Cup in Japan and South Korea. It has since been said that the players were given discounts of ninety per cent, but Nakheel has not confirmed that figure. Beckham and his pop-star wife, Victoria, do spend time in Dubai with their children. (In August, Michael Jackson took a tour of the Nakheel sales office.)

The Palm Jumeirah is now nearly finished. Hotels and shops are being built on the island's central "trunk"; earlier this month, Donald Trump agreed to lend his name to one such project, a lotus-shaped hotel clad in gold-tinted mirrored glass. The Palm Jebel Ali—the one featuring Sheikh Mohammed's poem—will be one and a half times larger than the Palm Jumeirah; and a third Palm, the Deira, if completed, will be one and a half times larger than that. Under the supervision of Dutch and Belgian reclamation engineers, they are being built out of dredged sand dropped onto the seafloor, with a precision allowed only by G.P.S. technology. (Homebuyers are assured that the mass of the sand gives it the firmness of rock, and that a rock breakwater surrounding the island will afford protection from high waves.)

Some scuba divers are unhappy about the construction, which has further clouded Dubai waters. When I met Haffar, he argued that the seabed off the shore of Dubai was quite empty—in his opinion, there was essentially nothing for divers to see. "If you're diving in there to see a desert, it doesn't really matter if the visibility is at the highest or the lowest level," he said. To prove the point, he showed me a video of a bare ocean floor, which he told me had been taken near the Palm Jumeirah. Haffar added that at the Jebel Ali site, which does have coral beds, care has been taken to minimize damage. He also told me that various items have been placed on the seabed to encourage marine life. These include wrecked ships, two fighter planes, and a Russian passenger aircraft that was brought in from Dubai International Airport, where, in 2001, it had an "unfortunate landing."

When plans for the first Palm were published, customers sometimes asked Nakheel about two small islands that they could see marked on maps, situated on either side of the main trunk. These were not for sale, but the Palm's developer was alerted to a market, and conceived the idea of developing individual luxury islands. According to Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, the chairman of Nakheel, and one of Sheikh Mohammed's key lieutenants, he met with the Sheikh in late 2001, just as American military forces were about to enter Afghanistan. Sheikh Mohammed "was looking at a map of the world on his computer," Sulayem recalled. "It was the Encarta program—you know, you can zoom in on any country." The Sheikh was trying to foresee how U.S. troops might move through the region. Then, with the atlas on his screen, Sheikh Mohammed had a real-estate epiphany. "Let's build them the World," he said.

One afternoon, I met Hamza Mustafa, an amused, ironic man of about thirty, who was born in Dubai but learned how to box at an English boarding school. He is very pleased with his business card, which reads, "General Manager, The World." When he handed me one, he quietly asked, "You know who I work for?," and then silently mouthed, "God." We stood in the Nakheel sales center, on Jumeirah Beach, where a dozen scale models are set around the room like tables in a pool hall—the Palm and the World among them. An elderly and frail German-speaking man, holding on to the arm of a salesman, was being led from one to another. A number of elegant, diffident young Emirati women—trophy receptionists, in a city where it is rare to see Emirati men or women with service jobs—moved about in traditional black abayas, with tiny sparkling handbags clutched tightly under their armpits, like the batons of drill sergeants.

Mustafa led me to the company pier, not far away, and onto a fifty-foot speedboat. Its cabin was furnished with maroon leather seats. Mustafa took off his headdress, and, turning to the uniformed pilot, said, "G-19, please." We raced away, bouncing from one wave to the next, and passing, in dazzling light, the Palm Jumeirah on our left, and the Burj Al Arab on our right. Mustafa alternated between cell-phone calls and expansive talk of vision and leadership. "Dubai is to Europeans like Miami is to New Yorkers, you know," he said.

The first design of the World envisaged seven islands representing seven continents. Modified over time, it is now planned as an archipelago of three hundred islands, each the size of several city blocks. The World has come to take the form of a jigsaw puzzle pulled apart, with a wide channel flowing between France and Spain, and Antarctica divided into twenty-six islands. G-19, where we were heading, is a section of Greenland, which, on this particular map projection, has been bulked up until it counts as a continent, and has more islands than South America. As Mustafa explained, Nakheel knew that the edges of the World would be more attractive to customers than its center, and that the further "north" one went—in the direction of open sea—the less one would be disturbed by water traffic. "The outer islands, you can do what you like, you can lie naked on your beach," he said.

After about fifteen minutes, we saw the first sandy humps: cartoon desert islands, without the trees. We slowed as we passed through a future Atlantic Ocean, then stopped at G-19, the only island so far developed. It is a Nakheel show island, featuring a lavish villa made of glass and stone in Malibu-modernist style, with an "infinity edge" swimming pool, a garish green lawn with a helipad marked on it, and six hundred palm trees. Date palms, which survive in Dubai only with conscientious watering, are grown in nurseries—some of them in Oman—and have become such a universal requirement of New Dubai that the price per tree has doubled, to three hundred dollars. Furthermore, dredged marine sand is not good for the cultivation of palms or grass, so dune sand needs to be brought in as topsoil, some of it from the neighboring emirate of Al Ain; Dubai, then, turns out to be a sand-importing city. We walked into the villa, past a long, unstocked bar, up to a cinema room, and on to a wide, hot terrace from which we had a view of the North America islands and, beyond, the skyline of Dubai. New York is still for sale, at a list price of thirty million dollars. Florida is thirty-two million.

The World's advertising copy asks us to "imagine a place where no-one is a stranger." The World would like us to think of it as a future residential enclave for the very rich: Beverly Hills married to Venice, where Liza Minnelli, say, would row across the Baltic to lunch with Rod Stewart. (A rumor that Stewart was buying the Great Britain island seems to be unfounded, however.) In fact, Nakheel expects to sell no more than a third of the islands to single owners for private use. Most will be bought by commercial developers, who will build hotels and other attractions. There is interest, for example, in turning D-37—Thailand—into a Thai-themed hotel. The World will therefore be more a resort than a refuge, but a resort brilliantly infused with the idea of billionaire-level wealth.

The eventual satellite photograph of the World is unlikely to resemble the projected satellite photograph widely seen in Dubai. Mustafa said that buyers will be entitled not only to rename their islands—he suggested "Beckham Island" as an example—but to alter their shape. Investors are, in truth, buying a square plot on a camouflaged grid. And the World has already begun to shift, in a real-estate version of plate tectonics. As Mustafa described it, a group of investors had shown an interest in A-4, the island provisionally called Adelaide, but wanted to build on it, to a height of six floors. This would have been tough on the islands behind it. In the end, the same developers bought all fourteen islands composing Australia, thereby securing the opportunity to build high. They now intend to "change the shape of the islands," Mustafa said. "Longer beaches, straighter islands, with bridges between them."

We sped back to the city. "We're passing Newfoundland right now," Mustafa said. "No, that's Labrador. That's Quebec. . . . No, we're still in Greenland. That's Nuuk." It was hard not to think of the crush of boats that will be needed to service three hundred islands, but Mustafa expressed confidence in the system of water lanes that the company has devised. "My biggest fear is that I build all the islands and don't sell them—because of bad publicity, or a terrorist act in Dubai, that destroys all this hard work," he said.

Mustafa said that thirty per cent of the World had been sold. This looks laggardly in a real-estate climate that has become used to claiming overnight sellouts. At the Nakheel offices, high on the wall, there are electronic-number displays, like those at a supermarket's meat counter, which were introduced a few years ago as a crowd-control measure after unruly scenes marred a number of real-estate launches. A German broker told me that he was astonished, when he arrived to work in Dubai, to see people "running, pushing and pulling" to buy unseen, unbuilt property.

But this summer the mood seemed a little less confident, and real estate was being sold aggressively—at times with apparent urgency. In a rare public expression of anxiety about oversupply, Matein Khalid, a columnist for the *Khaleej Times*, made what he called a conservative calculation: in 2007-08, approximately two hundred thousand new units of housing would become available. He estimated that there were presently only a hundred and fifty thousand rental units in Dubai; at an average of 3.5 people per unit, the new housing stock will require "about 800,000 new expats who are not laborers, housemaids, tailors, minimum wage bachelors. . . . In essence, a doubling of the professional, high-income salaried population of Dubai in the next two years. Realistic? Not at all."

Optimists could point to Dubai's hotel occupancy rate—eighty-six per cent last year—among other cheering signals. But a jitteriness was palpable. Newspapers ran recurring stories about traffic congestion; people spoke of the low-lying ocean developments with worry, following last year's Indian Ocean tsunami; rumors of Dubai's importance as a financial center for Al Qaeda were regularly repeated to me. I was shown a new housing subdivision that was said to be sliding down Dubai's only hill. (One could see cracks from the road.) In September, there was a protest march by eight hundred unpaid laborers, many of them Indians and Pakistanis.

Youssef Ibrahim, an American journalist who lives in Dubai, predicted a collapse of the emirate's housing bubble before the end of next year. "It is an open place, with extraordinary freedoms, but it could have been so much greater," he told me. "Now it's all to do with bragging about shopping malls, the tallest building, the tallest flagpole, pyramids, snow mountains." He concluded, "It's become all about greed."

Arabic is a language fond of formal indirectness, and, during the first planning sessions of the Arab-language edition of "The Apprentice," the producers decided to replace "You're fired!"—Donald Trump's catchphrase of blunt humiliation—with a line that translates into English as "May God be kind to you."

It was decided that this gentle blow would be delivered by Mohamed Ali Alabbar, in a production of the Lebanese Broadcasting Company. Alabbar seemed unfazed by the honor. "Who else are they going to use?" he asked me, straightforwardly. In preparation for the show's début, an Arab-language advertisement was made, featuring low, fast aerial shots along Sheikh Zayed Road, and the sight of Alabbar in a dark suit, rimless glasses, white shirt, and no tie, standing at the dazzling white base of the Emirates Towers. He said to the camera, "You're daring. You see no limits. Come and compete."

The production hit a snag. Earlier this year, Alabbar had a conversation with Eli Epstein, a New York businessman, who is an Orthodox Jew and a friend of Alabbar's for many years. Epstein proposed a scheme to buy Israeli-built property and infrastructure in Gaza which would otherwise be dismantled when the settlements there were emptied; it could then be "cleaned up," as Alabbar put it, and sold commercially, with the profits funding Palestinian public works.

"I said, 'Eli, you're crazy. But you know what? I like it. It's so simple it's stupid.'" In April, Alabbar visited Gaza and Jerusalem, on what he described to me as a private visit. ("The Palestinians are speaking to the Israelis," he said. "Why can't I speak to the Israelis?") He spoke with members of the Israeli parliament, and, according to *Haaretz* and the Jerusalem *Post*, met briefly with President Ariel Sharon. (Alabbar has denied this.) On leaving a meeting with Shimon Peres, Israel's Deputy Prime Minister, he walked into a cluster of reporters, and his private visit became public. "I didn't know that Mr. Peres had invited the TV cameras," he told me, laughing. "Me, interviewed on Israeli TV!"

Stories appeared in the Arab media. "I got in trouble," Alabbar said, smiling. When he called his mother (a woman from whom he keeps the fact that he smokes cigars), she said, "Mohamed, God bless you, I know you mean to do well, but your Arab brothers think you're crazy." Once home, he had to explain himself in a television interview. Sheikh Mohammed was supportive, Alabbar said, but not long after the visit plans for "The Apprentice" were put on hold. The show may yet be revived, Alabbar said. "I'll consult His Highness again," he said.

Alabbar has shareholders, but he also has a royal patron; one has to imagine Richard Branson answering to, and being underwritten by, Queen Elizabeth II. When I joined him on his flight to Beirut, he was in a breezy mood: "We're going to a cool place—beautiful people, fashionable people, easy living. The Lebanese have good taste, the best taste. If you look at the girls, you will not leave." But, less breezily, he told me that the reason he had flown this chartered jet not from Dubai's main airport but, rather, from the town of Sharjah, a few miles away, was to insure that "the minimum of people know." He did not want a reputation for flashiness. "A businessman flying a private aircraft?" he explained. "You're competing with royalty." For similar reasons of political prudence, he planned to refer to a bodyguard whom he had just hired as a "personal assistant." On the flight, he stopped talking for a while in order to work on a speech he was to give that afternoon at the Arab Economic Forum; it was about the importance of Arab business divorcing itself from government interference and dependency. The theme seemed to be an expression of denial, or a request for freedom.

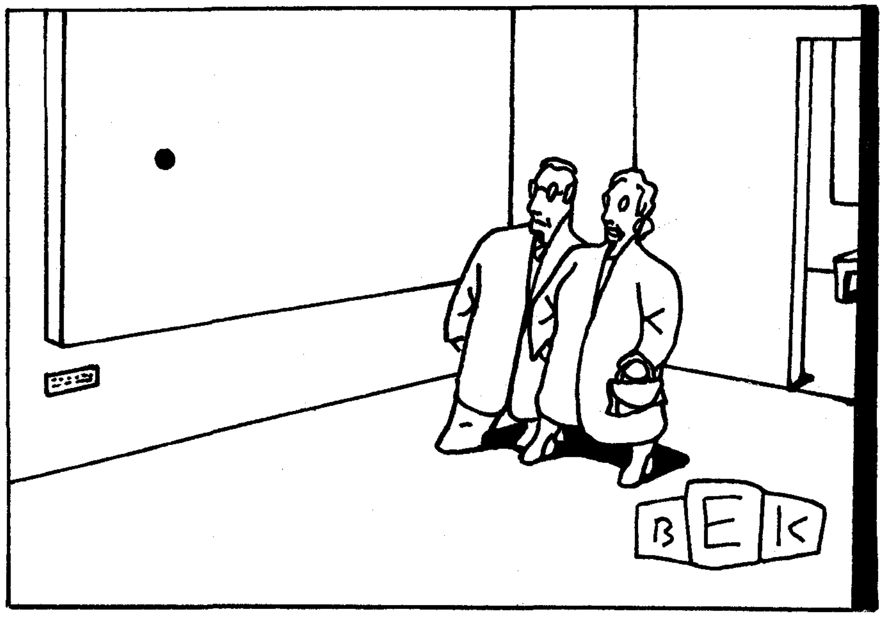
About a hundred thousand people had applied to compete in the Arab version of "The Apprentice," Alabbar told me. "This region is way behind all the regions of the world, except sub-Saharan Africa," he said. "There's no time to stop, the world is so advanced compared to us, we've been sleeping for so long. In Dubai, we have to be the example to the region. Let them get up, out of envy, out of competition, but let them get up." He praised one of Sheikh Mohammed's recent speeches, in which he told his fellow Arab leaders, "If you do not change, you will be changed." Alabbar went on, "I'm talking about one and a half billion people. They need to get married, they need to get educated, they need to dance. They need to live. You can read about this and forget about this, or you can jump in. Increase your capital, take advantage. And, also, I want to be No. 1 in the world."

The day before Alabbar's flight to Beirut, after the Dubai stock market closed, his company had announced a proposed recapitalization. Given shareholder approval, Emaar would double its stock. Existing shareholders would have the opportunity to buy as many new shares as they had old shares, at a discounted price designed to compensate for the dilution. In another market, at another time, this kind of announcement might pull down the price of a company. But this year in Dubai Emaar could reasonably expect a lift: the company's share price rose from one dirham (about twenty-five cents) to thirty-three dirham (more than eight dollars) between June, 2004, and June, 2005, and, as Alabbar suggested to me, Emaar might offer the new stock at only ten or fifteen dirham.

That morning, Alabbar left home before the exchange opened. But as the plane flew toward Lebanon, following the border of Saudi Arabia and Iraq, his colleagues kept in touch with the office by phone. They first reported that there were "lines around the block" at the exchange. A few minutes after it opened, Emaar's stock price had risen by fifteen per cent—the limit allowed by the rules of the exchange—giving the company a market capitalization of nearly thirty billion dollars, which, surprisingly, put Emaar in the neighborhood of McDonald's, Sony, and Federal Express. By the time we reached Lebanon, Emaar was worth three billion dollars more than when we took off.

I asked Alabbar about the kind of competition he faces in Dubai. "His Highness is smart," he said. "He created the others to compete. He said, 'I'll put three horses in the race, they'll all run, they are all my horses.' I like that." Did Alabbar truly think of himself as a horse owned by the Sheikh? "I am his horse, but a horse is very valuable to Sheikh Mohammed," he said. I asked if he wanted to run in his own race one day. "Yes," he said. "But maybe I'm having the best of both worlds."

He spoke of Sheikh Mohammed's enthusiasm for the petalled design of the Burj Dubai. At the time of the architectural competition, the Sheikh had asked if the tower would be the tallest in the world, and Alabbar assured him that it would. "Then, the other day, I passed him in the corridor," Alabbar recalled. "He said, 'Mohamed, you remember when we were talking about the tower?' 'Yes,' I said. '*Is* it the tallest?' he asked again. 'Yes,' I said." ♦



"Where does he get all his ideas?"

THE ART BUSINESS

SALESMAN

Days and nights in Leo Koenig's gallery.

BY NICK PAUMGARTEN

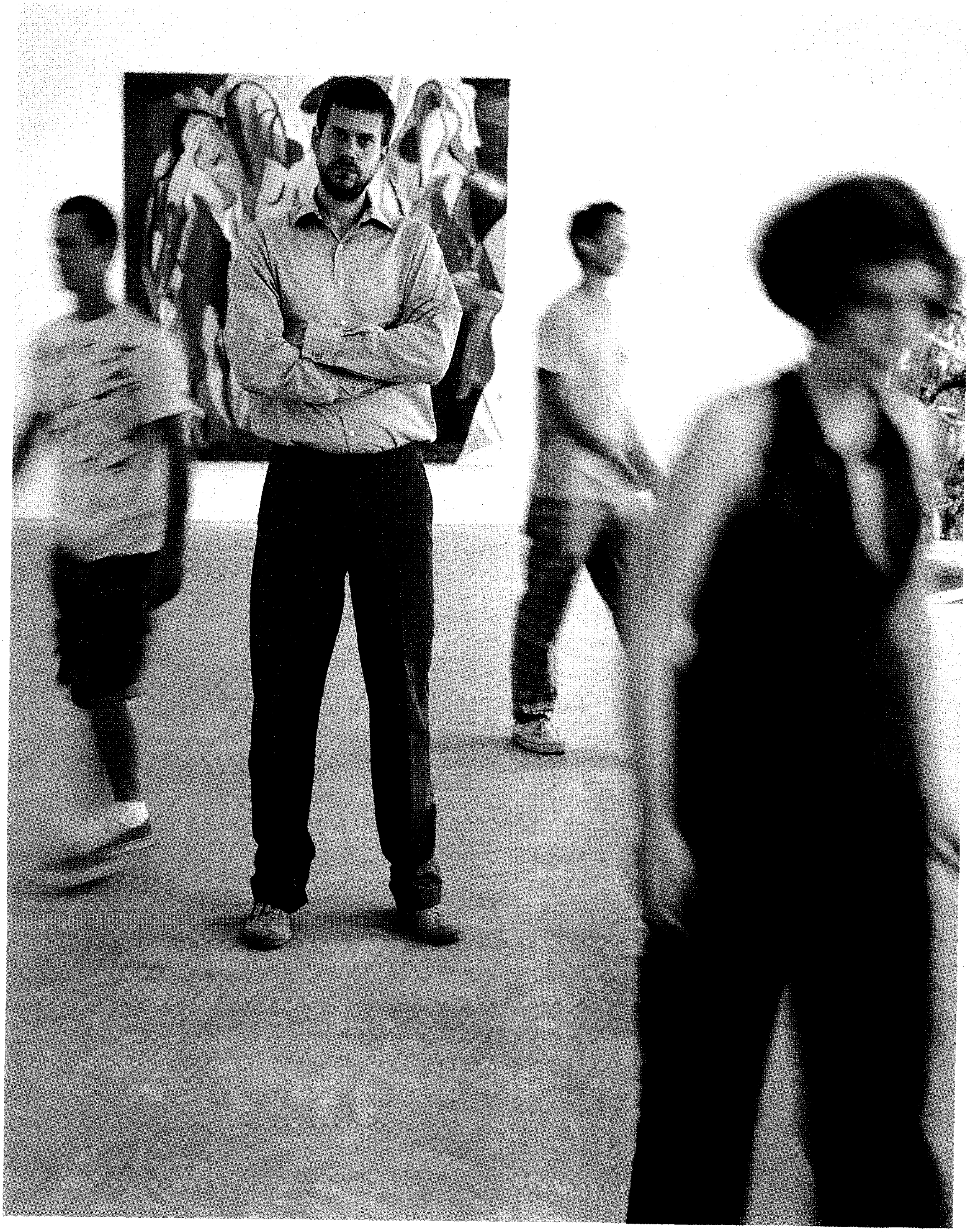
Of the many moments that may have moved Leo Koenig to become an art dealer, the one he'd choose, if he had to choose one, is an encounter he had eight years ago, when he was twenty and living with three roommates—two Lithuanians and a German—in an apartment in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. He'd come to New York from Munich a few months earlier, in part to avoid military service in Germany. One night, another Lithuanian stopped in, an artist named Aidas Bareikis. They had dinner and then began drinking vodka. After a while, Koenig suggested that they try snorting the vodka instead, which can be rough on the nasal passages but in this instance had the desired effect of fostering an atmosphere conducive to the telling of life stories.

Bareikis, who was twenty-nine, had a good one. In 1985, as an art-school student in Vilnius, he'd been drafted into the Soviet Army. After two months, a Soviet general paid his unit a visit. There was a uniform inspection, and Bareikis was found to be wearing an undershirt on which he'd painted the Lithuanian flag. He was sent to the brig—solitary confinement in a pitch-black cistern buried in the ground—and then to a mental hospital, where doctors could not find evidence that his affection for his native republic had anything to do with madness. He was shipped off to Afghanistan, to fight the mujahideen. At first, he didn't see combat, but he did see, while loading trains bound for Russia, some of its results: caskets, quadriplegics, amputees. He came across a mangled helicopter covered in soldiers' blood. Later, his convoy was ambushed, and he spent three days and nights behind a rock, pinned down by enemy fire. He told himself, "I've got to go back to art school."

Bareikis and a few other Baltic draftees began scrounging for pencils and grinding the graphite into powder, which they inhaled through their noses in an effort to poison themselves. They also tried rolling fingernail parings into their cigarettes and depriving themselves of sleep. After a couple of weeks of this, Bareikis, delirious and suffering from high blood pressure, was ordered to see the unit's medical officer, who was instantly suspicious. "Are you faking it or not?" he asked Bareikis. Bareikis decided to tell the truth, and the officer decided to help him. Bareikis was hospitalized and declared unfit for combat. Eventually, he returned to Vilnius, finished school, won a Fulbright, and, in 1992, made his way to New York, to pursue an M.F.A. He spoke almost no English. For money, he did construction and demolition work. He was often homeless. He found that if he slept in a tree in Central Park no one would bother him. For a while, he squatted in a loft in SoHo; on the same day he got evicted, he learned that he'd won a green card in the State Department's immigration lottery—an experience that became the inspiration for a piece titled "You Have Fifteen Minutes to Leave," which, like most of his work, was a gaudy and monstrous sculptural installation of found or shoplifted materials. In general, his work was hard to sell, and even harder to look at, but in some circles he acquired a reputation as a sort of a beacon—the genuine article.

Koenig considers the night he met Bareikis to be one of the best of his life. They stayed up past dawn and became fast friends. Months later, when Koenig mentioned to Bareikis that he was looking for something adventurous to do, a way to bring people together and have a little fun—he was thinking of opening a restaurant—Bareikis told him, "No, you should do a gallery." Koenig did, and in his inaugural show he exhibited a work by Bareikis called "Embarkation for Cythera" (after Watteau). The gallery was in Williamsburg. Koenig and Bareikis transported the installation, disassembled and crammed into garbage bags, from Bareikis's studio by bicycle. On the day of the opening, they sat alone in the gallery, waiting for people to show up. To allay their anxiety, they started in on the mountain of beer they'd stockpiled for the occasion and eventually sank into a stupor in a back room. Hours later, they came to and discovered that the gallery was full—some seven hundred guests, if Koenig recalls correctly. Art revellers spilled into the street. Among them was Klaus Biesenbach, the chief curator at P.S. 1, who liked the work enough to include Bareikis in an exhibition of emerging artists. Bareikis's installation at P.S. 1, "Yellow Peril, Friendly Fire," was purchased for thirteen thousand dollars by an eccentric collector from Berlin. It was Koenig's first sale.

Koenig likes this version of his beginnings because it accentuates the wildness of the early days, the serendipity and the cheek. It also camouflages the significance of his birthright. Koenig's father, Kasper, is the director of the Museum Ludwig, in Cologne, and is one of the most prominent curators in Europe. Koenig's mother, Ilka, is a well-known purveyor of art books in Munich. His uncle Walter is one of Europe's biggest publishers of art books. (There is also family wealth—a house-paint business going back several generations—but it has not accrued either to Kasper Koenig or to his children.) Leo Koenig grew up surrounded by artists and critics, steeped, if not fully engaged, in their work and conversation, and his surname has eased his entry into the art trade. It confers legitimacy, in a world where legitimacy is amorphous and highly coveted. Some people begrudge him his connections, and point out that making it in the art world is so easy for a Koenig that even Leo's younger half brother Johann has a gallery, despite



Koenig at his new Chelsea gallery, with, from left, Erik Parker, Tony Matelli, and Kelli Williams. Photograph by Cass Bird.

being almost blind. (When he was eleven, he was playing with fireworks and they exploded in his face.) Some skeptics also say that Koenig hasn't done much with the head start, that he is merely a party boy—the Paris Hilton of Germany, as one art-world figure said to me, with an anonymous unkindness that seems typical of the trade. But others recognize that the advantage has as much to do with sensibility as with preferential treatment; his boyhood exposure to the art world, to its esoteric language of ideas, attitudes, and names, gave him an education that he would not have received in graduate school. Anyway, as far as the Paris Hilton problem is concerned, Koenig has mellowed, to the extent that these days he finds himself going through what he wistfully calls "a nostalgic phase." He fears being seen as a sellout, a mere merchant among the creative and difficult souls who make the art, and the hard partying seems, by his reckoning, a kind of inoculation against that. Reputation, in this world, requires a delicate balance: being both a businessman and a rascal, without being seen as too much of one or the other, or even as either one at all, entails constant adjustment, whether you are an art prince or a self-made man.

TWILIGHT

There's a black bear
in the apple tree
and he won't come down.
I can hear him panting,
like an athlete.
I can smell the stink
of his body.

Come down, black bear.
Can you hear me?

The mind is the most interesting thing to me;
like the sudden death of the sun,
it seems implausible that darkness will swallow it
or that anything is lost forever there,
like a black bear in a fruit tree,
gulping up sour apples
with dry sucking sounds,

or like us at the pier, sombre and tired,
making food from sunlight,
you saying a word, me saying a word, trying hard,
though things were disintegrating.

The occasion for these anxieties was his gallery's move, this summer, from the backwater of Centre Street, at the edge of Chinatown, to a big storefront space in Chelsea, as concentrated a district of art exhibition and commerce as exists anywhere. Chelsea attracts collectors, small buyers, browsers, consultants, advisers, curators, critics, and all kinds of "weirdo cats who make money off the art world in weird ways," a curator/critic/consultant named David Hunt told me. Together, they are after some kind of consensus of taste, and the money and the acclaim—and even the transcendence—that come with it.

This pursuit has got a little out of hand in recent years. Art, like real estate, has been enjoying a long and durable speculative boom, attracting, as it did a century ago, in the days of Duveen, the obsessive and competitive attentions of an expanding class of people who are very, very rich and who, for reasons ranging from the noble to the crass, have chosen visual art as an instrument for their aspirations. The appetite for new work is such that little-known artists command outlandish prices—if the circumstances align, a first-timer might sell a painting for fifteen thousand dollars, and then see its price double inside of a year. There are more artists, more galleries, and more buyers, and as a result the art world has grown more diffuse. There is no era-defining dealer, as there was in the heyday of Leo Castelli or of Mary Boone. Larry Gagosian is a powerhouse; Marian Goodman is a doyenne. But there are dozens of gallery owners out there, many of them young, with artists who, to varying degrees, are critically celebrated, institutionally represented, and commercially successful. Thirty years from now, a few of these dealers will have some claim to permanence. This depends, of course, on their artists' work, and it is the dealer's role to persuade people to think highly of it. "I'm aware that if I do my job right I will be forgotten and the artists will never be forgotten," Koenig told me one night. He likes to think that he is presiding over an incipient movement, citing as a model the community of German neo-expressionists who came to prominence three or four decades ago, some of whom are family friends. The correlation is as strained as it is personal, but it reflects his belief that, as he put it, "you create your own context."

Koenig represents a dozen artists, most of them emerging artists. There are just two women: the painter Nicole Eisenman, who had a reputation and following before she joined Koenig, and Kelli Williams, who has made just six paintings and has never sold one. Mainly, Koenig's enterprise is anchored by a group of hard-drinking New York men in their thirties, who have been with him more or less from the beginning. The artists hang out together, and Koenig hangs out with them. In this respect, the gallery is unusual, more fraternity than salon. "There is so much cheating and finagling in this business that a lot of dealers don't want their artists even talking to each other," Koenig told me. He rarely goes anywhere without at least one or two of his artists in tow. He hosts regular dinners in restaurants, arraying them around him like apostles. The artists call him Opa, the German for Grandpa, even though he is years younger than

Still, I wanted you,
your lips on my neck,
your postmodern sexuality.
Forlorn and anonymous:
I didn't want to be that. I could hear
the great barking monsters of the lower waters
calling me forward.

You see, my mind takes me far,
but my heart dreams of return.

Black bear,
with pale-pink tongue
at the center of his face,
is turning his head,
like the face of Christ from life.
Shaking the apple boughs,
he is stronger than I am
and seems so free of passion—
no fear, no pain, no tenderness. I want to be that.

Come down, black bear,
I want to learn the faith of the indifferent.

—*Henri Cole*

most of them. "You look for these surrogate fathers and then you play one," he told me.

Koenig's most striking attribute, besides his youth, is his height. He is six feet four inches tall—gangly, long-limbed, and baby-faced. These days, he has a beard and close-cropped hair. A few years ago, he abruptly put on sixty-five pounds, transforming himself into a startling caricature of a brau-and-bratwurst Münchner, but then he quit drinking for a spell and, with the aid of a treadmill, a rowing machine, and a sauna that he installed in his bedroom, reverted to form. Still, he can project a cartoonish persona: the way he allows his arms and legs to flap around and his eyes to bulge after he's had a couple of pints suggests that he has a good sense of what it is about Germans—bossiness, buffoonery, clusters of consonants—that Americans find funny. He often wears suspenders. His accent is not overwhelming, but his malaprop rate is about two per hour: "Can you borrow me a pen?" "Let's have a night drink."

I often heard Koenig pass judgment on works of art ("fantastic," "amazing," "crap"), but he rarely explained himself, except to mention the work's provenance or to point out a section of it and say, "Look at that," as though taste, his and everyone else's, were universal. It takes a certain amount of nerve to act as though one knows what is good or, more important, what will be deemed good in the future. It's an article of faith in the art world that some people have an eye for it and some people don't; the disagreement arises over which do or don't.

"I am happy when people relate to my way of thinking," Koenig told me one evening, over Pilsners in the back office at his gallery, Leo Koenig Inc. He was seated behind a big desk, hands clasped behind his head, a wall of art books to his left, a small neon sign that read "DEALER" to his right. "And there is a monetary aspect to that. The more money you make, the more people are relating to it." By that measure, people seem to be relating well to him. Still, he offers contradictory statements about his financial status, a reflection of the murkiness of the business he is in. To the art market, obfuscation is like oxygen. One moment, he would say, as he showed me his messy one-bedroom apartment, just upstairs from his old gallery on Centre Street, with its fairly slapdash and unceremoniously displayed collection of art work, "I can't afford my own art." Then, some other time, he would say, of his new gallery space, which he currently rents for fifteen thousand dollars a month, "I could buy this in a day if I wanted to," suggesting that a couple of million dollars was a phone call away. His longtime girlfriend Debora Warner, an artist with whom he shares the apartment, told him, during a recent drunken 3 A.M. heart-to-heart, "I don't understand your financial situation."

The rudiments are this: He generally pockets fifty per cent of every sale—the industry standard. A few of his artists, such as the Austrian conceptual collective Gelatin and the versatile prankster Jonathan Meese, are based in Europe and have their primary dealers there. He handles their work in the United States, and usually kicks back ten per cent of each sale to the primary dealer. (He gets a similar cut when his artists show abroad.) Some of his artists receive money from him up front, which can result, essentially, in his owning their work. Not everyone is comfortable with this arrangement, as it implies a kind of indentured servitude; others require it. He does not have contracts with any of them. A dealer does not want to sell one of his artist's pieces to someone who will turn around and resell it a month or a year later, because then the dealer can't control who gets the artist's work, in what context it will be exhibited, or at what price it will sell. If a work turns up at auction, the dealer often must be ready to bid on it himself. He may even buy work straight out of his own artist's studio. "If I'm not happy with a particular piece of work, I might buy it and put it in storage, to keep it off the market," Koenig told me. He says that he has a net worth of zero; the profits go back into the business. That may be so, but there are probably more zeros this year than last. He estimates that he will sell ten million dollars' worth of art in 2005, many times more than he has sold before.

This has been possible because, in addition to selling his own artists' work, he has been active in the secondary market—that is, buying and selling work that has already been sold at least once. With good contacts and a good eye, you can make a fine living at it. Sometimes this involves speculating, acquiring works in the expectation of reselling them for more later; sometimes it involves matching up a collector who covets a particular work with one who wants to part with it. The market is unregulated and inefficient. "I do well with my artists," Koenig said. "But the secondary market puts me at ease." Koenig spent months this year discussing a potential offshore enterprise, with a Danish dealer named Jens Faurschou and two anonymous investors, to deal in the secondary market. They talked about the venture during the Basel art fair, in June. To keep people at the fair from finding out who was involved, they met in a private room in a restaurant in a village across the border in France, arriving in separate cars. "It was super secret," Koenig said. "A total spy thing."

A year and a half ago, a collector named Andy Hall and his wife, Christine, walked into the gallery on Centre Street. Hall had bought, in London, a painting by Frank Nitsche, a Berlin abstractionist, and learned that Koenig was Nitsche's New York dealer, so he came in looking for more. Koenig introduced himself, and he and Hall quickly established that they had similar enthusiasms, especially for German neo-expressionist painting, a category that includes Georg Baselitz, a close family friend of the Koenigs, as well as Jörg Immendorff, Anselm Kiefer, Markus Lüpertz, and A. R. Penck. Hall had begun collecting their work. In Koenig, he found someone who, in spite of his youth, knew a great deal about these artists, and who could also claim a personal connection to a few of them.

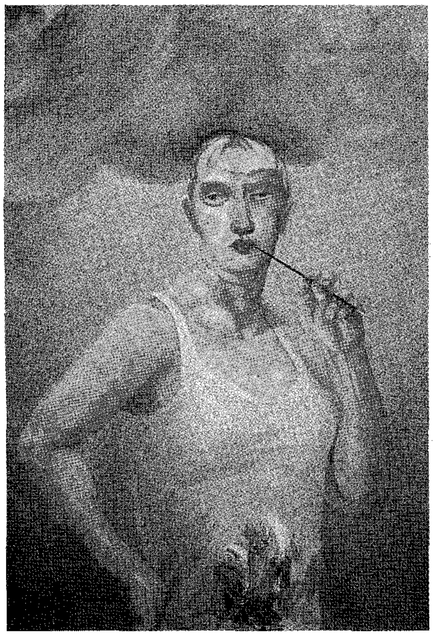
Koenig sold Hall another Nitsche, then asked if he was interested in Penck. Hall brightened: Penck was an obsession. Koenig took Hall and his wife up to his apartment, where he had several Penck drawings that he'd purchased from his father. Hall bought these. Soon, Koenig had Hall collecting the work of some of his own artists as well.

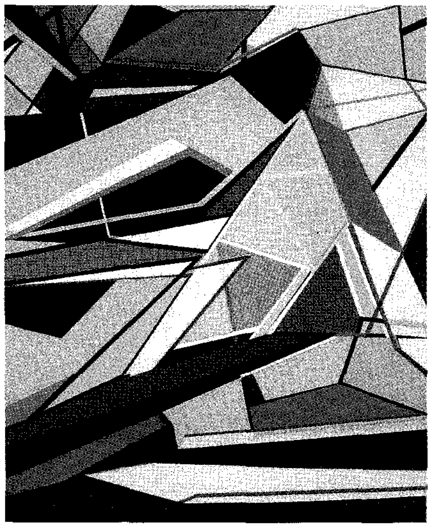
Hall, a fifty-four-year-old Englishman who lives in Connecticut, is the chief executive of Phibro, a commodities firm. He has made a lot of money trading oil and gas. He is tall, meticulous, and extremely fit, a former president of the Oxford boat club who rowed competitively until two years ago, and he approaches art collecting with the fanatical dedication of an oarsman. He had his first New York gallery experience three years ago. "I hate shopping, I hate salespeople, and I had this feeling that gallerists were salespeople," he told me. "Also there's a whole in-ness, with regard to which galleries are hot, that I can't stand." Nonetheless, one Saturday morning he and Christine walked into Mary Boone's gallery, on Fifth Avenue, where they took a liking to a piece by an artist named John McCracken. "One of the Stepford men, one of her gallery assistants, said, 'Are you serious?' I said I was. And he said, 'Mary would like to talk to you.' " The Halls were led back into Mary Boone's office and connected to her by phone. "What do I have to do to make you like it enough to buy it?" she asked.

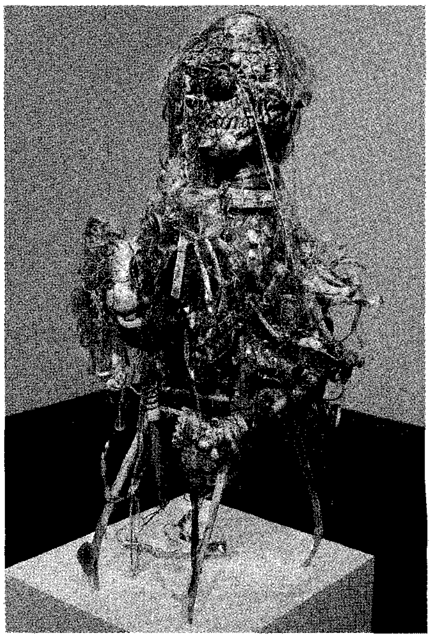
"Make me an offer I can't refuse," Hall replied. She did, and Hall had a McCracken.

Koenig prefers to cultivate an air of fellowship and collaboration with his clients. "They can never tell whether I'm selling or just talking," Koenig said. He has a way, when sitting with the Halls and flipping briskly through books in search of paintings for them to covet, of arousing fervor for works of art. ("Look at all those Pencks," I heard Hall mutter once, as the pages flew by. "Somehow I thought that I had them all.") Although the dealer represents the artist, Koenig also occasionally finds himself working on the collector's behalf, becoming a kind of adviser—an agent working both sides. He spends a great deal of time with them, on the phone or in restaurants. His client list has two hundred names, but there is a handful to whom he turns most often, and who are the most supportive of his artists' work.

Last fall, Koenig suggested that the







Works by six of Leo Koenig's artists, from left, Nicole Eisenman's "Inspiration," Torben Giehler's "13th Step," Aidas Bareikis

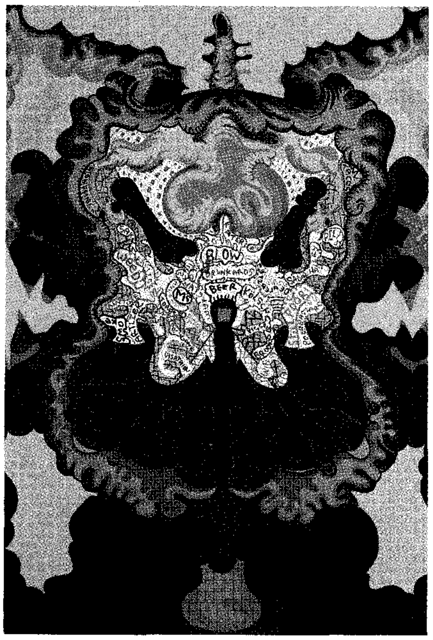
Halls travel with him to Germany, to meet Georg Baselitz at his home, a renovated thirteenth-century castle in Derneburg. (Derneburg was familiar ground for Koenig; when he was a child, Baselitz would take him eel fishing after midnight in a river that runs near the castle.) At around the same time, Koenig got a call from his mother, who told him that Baselitz and his wife, Elke, were thinking of moving and were mulling what to do with their vast collection of contemporary German art—a hundred and twenty works, which occupied some twenty rooms on the castle's third floor. "Huge works," Koenig told me. "No itsy-fitsy stuff. Five or six real masterpieces." Baselitz had wanted them in a museum, and had made overtures to the local government, but talks had fallen through. Koenig didn't say anything about this to the Halls. He didn't want to appear as if he were selling something.

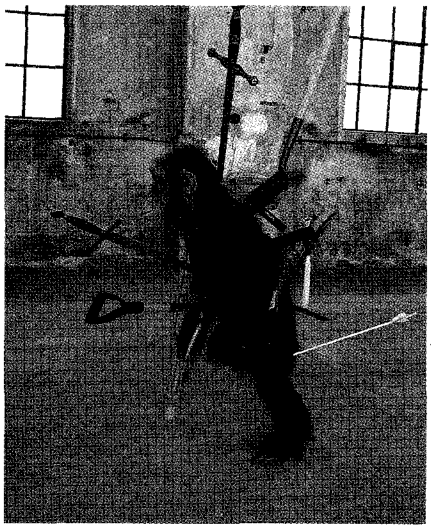
Baselitz has a reputation for cantankerousness, but the Halls' visit went well. "We were so excited to somehow have passed the test with Georg," Christine Hall, a slim, fashionable, and slightly giddy Englishwoman, told me. "You're always nervous that you're going to be somehow gauche." They were smitten by the collection, but the idea of buying it did not occur to them until months later, when, after several more trips of his own, Koenig floated the possibility. The Baselitzes thought of Koenig less as a dealer than as a kind of son—a boy, really—but, because he'd introduced the Halls to them, he was the obvious go-between. Eventually, Elke Baselitz called Koenig with a number.

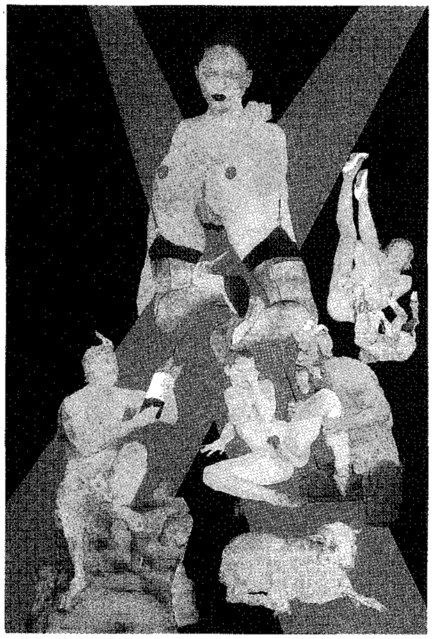
"It was a big, big fucking figure," Koenig told me. "This was a hundred times bigger than anything I've done." He relayed the information to Hall, who had by now allowed the notion to take shape in his mind, and asked him not to tell anyone about it—Koenig had stopped discussing the matter even with his mother. "You would've had people trying to dip their fingers into the cake, so to say," Koenig told me. Anton Kern, Baselitz's son, who is a prominent dealer in New York, was not involved. Neither was Larry Gagosian, who is Baselitz's dealer. In April, Hall bought the entire collection, for an estimated price of seven million dollars. (Neither Koenig nor Hall would confirm a figure.) Koenig said that his own cut, once you factor in some additional deals, was less than ten per cent. "There's one person in the world who would or could buy that collection," Koenig told me. "The whole deal was perfect, absolutely perfect. It was really beautiful." Then he added, "It paid for the new gallery."

Hall told Koenig recently, "I don't know if I'm a complete idiot and you're the best salesman in New York or if we are really onto something here." That something involves amassing a collection that might one day be able to stand on its own in a private museum, either here or in Germany, perhaps even in Derneburg. Recently, the Halls, Koenig, and Baselitz have been discussing the prospect of the Halls' buying the castle. It would house the Halls' collection, and serve both as a monument to Baselitz and his contemporaries and as an exhibition space for new art. Koenig would have a role, although it's not yet clear what that would be. This year, Hall also bought thirty new Kiefer paintings from a gallery in London, for around four million dollars, and an additional fifteen Baselitz paintings from the artist himself; again, Gagosian was not involved. Koenig was emboldened by the experience. He told me one evening, after several pints, "I'm going to be Georg Baselitz's dealer. I'm going to be Anselm Kiefer's dealer. If it's thirty years from now, so be it. But I have a feeling."

A dealer must often make studio visits—to find new artists or to check in with his own. Sometimes collectors come along, taking the opportunity to see the artist in his element and to buy work before it has been shown, or even finished. Sometimes the dealer goes







oldsnuff," Erik Parker's "Shattered," Tony Matelli's "Fucked," and Kelli Williams's "Double Happiness."

alone, keeping collectors' requests in mind. One day last spring, I accompanied Koenig as he made the rounds.

A livery car conveyed us to Brooklyn, to a windowless garage belonging to Erik Parker, whose street-waif manner and graffiti-imbued art work have earned him some attention, here and abroad. Parker, who is thirty-seven, elicits good prices—in the range of twenty to forty-five thousand dollars a painting. He seemed tongue-tied and anxious; the whine of an oil-tanker truck across the street was driving him mad. To drown it out, he'd put on a record of Hawaiian chants. The sonic mix suited the paintings, which were garish and psychedelic, with dyslexically rendered slogans about the art world and the global energy market.

"Out of this batch," Koenig explained to me, "two paintings have to go to the Basel art fair. And one has to go to the next group show at the gallery." He expected it to be sold to a couple from Long Island.

In the current overheated market, the laws of supply and demand do not necessarily apply: often, the more work an artist creates, the higher the prices he fetches. Each show presents an opportunity to charge more. Parker, for example, shows at galleries in Zurich, Berlin, Tokyo, and Milan, to say nothing of the art fairs, which have proliferated and become increasingly frenzied and lucrative. Consequently, Parker can have a show every few months. Each one leads to more critical appraisal, more talk, more buying, and higher prices. It keeps him very busy turning out product.

Parker gave Leo and me a lift to another Williamsburg garage, where Tony Matelli, a thirty-four-year old sculptor with a caustic and literate sense of humor, was applying plaster bandages to the shaved leg of an assistant, in order to make a cast for a new edition in a series called "Fucked." Earlier versions had featured models of chimpanzees and humans impaled with various tools and weapons: axes, swords, chain saws. The new one would portray a couple, already impaled, being clobbered from above by a baby grand piano. The piano, in tatters, would be sculpted out of fibreglass, plastic, and wood. "Great piece, tricky sell," Koenig said. It was destined for a show in Copenhagen. The gallery there was balking at giving Matelli an additional eight thousand dollars to finish the work, so Koenig had offered to put up the money, hoping to extract recompense later. There was a discussion about some collectors who wanted to borrow another of Matelli's works to exhibit with their collection. "And now they want to show it in their piece-of-shit ghetto space?" Matelli said, as he worked. "Please. If they were better collectors, I'd say fine."

Aidas Bareikis's studio was a few blocks away, a small space on the ground floor of an old warehouse. It was taken up mostly by a sculpture called "Mugpuller," based on a game Bareikis used to play as a child in Vilnius, to see who could make the strangest face. Bareikis must have been good at it. He had big, startled-looking eyes, an expansive mouth, a jutting jaw, and enviable bed head. He seemed dismayed to have company. There was no real business for Koenig to conduct here. The point was just to see Aidas.

"Mugpuller" consisted of a breathtaking arrangement of ghouls fashioned out of heaps of plastic toys and knickknacks, which Bareikis had partially melted on a grill and spray-painted gold. "I haven't seen this one," Koenig said.

"It isn't finished yet," Bareikis said.

"A collector from Zurich is interested," Koenig explained. "It just needs a bit more . . . intensity."

Bareikis gestured toward his ghouls. "Yeah, I need to fuck them up."

The three of us walked a few doors down to Torben Giehler's studio, a big, clean loft space hung with a few giant colorful canvases. An assistant was painting a wall white, and Giehler, a red-faced German whose shyness might be mistaken for hostility, was removing tape from a painting of a mountain composed of multicolored quadrilaterals. The assistant wheeled away a paint cart. The scene brought to mind an operating room after surgery. Giehler silently appraised his work.

"That's fucking great," Koenig said.

"That's fucking great," Giehler mimicked, in a mock-Cockney accent.

Koenig's core artists are prolific. Nearly all of them are painters, which leaves him out of step with the current curatorial enthusiasm for photography and video art. As unadventurous as painting can sometimes be, it makes for good business, because paintings last a long time, and they fit well into an existing tradition of visual art. Owing to the decorative aspect of painting, there is a broader base of possible buyers than there is for video art or sculpture or installation. Bareikis, for example, has a hard time selling his work, though it does find its way into museums. To make ends meet, he continues to do construction and demolition work. Giehler, on the other hand, can make twenty paintings a year and sell them for between twenty and fifty thousand each. (It seemed telling that while we were at Giehler's studio Koenig sent Bareikis out to get beer.)

"I just don't care if people think that painting is past," Koenig told me. "I feel comfortable with painting. It's what I know. I've tried with photography, for example, and I've failed miserably. Photography just doesn't do it for me. It's so easy to make a photograph visually compelling."

Some of the other artists converged on Giehler's studio, and then everyone trooped a few blocks down the street to a place they call May's, a nondescript Chinese restaurant that used to be a hangout for the Koenig crew. Twenty people—the artists and their mates—gathered around a few tables near the window, over heaps of moo-shu pork and bottles of beer (Koenig's favorite, Reissdorf, from Cologne, which he had arranged to have imported to May's). People wandered outside to smoke. An argument sprouted up, out of Koenig's earshot, when one artist's wife suggested that all Germans were Nazis. After a while, I found myself sitting across from Bareikis, who, with a grim and transfixing gaze, began to tell me about Afghanistan.

Koenig was born in New York in 1977, and though he spent less than a year here, he told me he has memories of it—ambient memories, SoHo in the lizard brain. He was Kasper and Ilka's third child. They were already separated when she became pregnant with him. "Leo was my present to Kasper, to try to make it work again," she told me. It didn't. The Koenigs moved to Munich and the marriage ended. Leo, throughout his childhood, saw little of his father, for whom he substituted various male friends of his mother's, among them Penck and Baselitz; Penck helped him learn how to draw. His mother called Leo *der Rattenfänger*, after the Pied Piper of Hamelin, because other children used to follow him around. He told me that he was "first terrible in school, then brilliant—kind of figured it out." For his final project in high school, he interviewed Baselitz. His interest in art really took shape in the summer of 1997, when his father got him a job as an assistant on the Münster Sculpture project, a once-a-decade exhibition throughout the city of Münster, north of Cologne. His father took care to treat him no better than the other assistants. They stayed together in Leo's grandmother's mansion. They got into a big argument one night, when the elder Koenig returned to the house ready for his evening bath and found that his son had filled the tub with bottles of beer.

When Leo moved to New York at the end of that summer, his mother arranged for him to stay in the SoHo loft of her old friend Hiroko Kawahara and her husband, the reclusive conceptual artist On Kawara, who is famous for writing telegrams to friends saying simply, "I'm still alive." ("I remember him, of course, but I've never been to his gallery," On Kawara said, when I unexpectedly got him on the phone this summer. This doesn't say much: Kawara has never even been to an opening for one of his own shows.) Meanwhile, Koenig's father had given Leo a list of names, which he used to secure three internships: with the gallery owner Paula Cooper, the art dealer and publisher Brooke Alexander, and the German dealer David Zwirner, the son of the gallery owner Rudolf Zwirner, with whom, incidentally, Kasper Koenig had got his start, decades earlier. Leo was working for Zwirner when he decided to go off on his own. Koenig says that to raise money for the Williamsburg gallery he bought a half-dozen Raymond Pettibon drawings from Zwirner and sold them, at a markup, to Zwirner's clients—an end run that did not endear Koenig to his boss. "Be careful," Koenig recalls Zwirner telling him. "You're starting to be clever. Don't be clever."

Amid a burgeoning Williamsburg art scene, Koenig put cleverness aside and instead played the heedless impresario. His gallery became known not so much for art as for art parties. There were benders, at home and abroad. Often when I spent time with Koenig and his artists, he tried to get them to tell me stories about the wild times. Usually, he'd wind up telling them himself. "Shall we talk about Copenhagen?" Leo prompted them, one evening.

"There should be a movie," Giehler said.

"What happened in Copenhagen?" I asked.

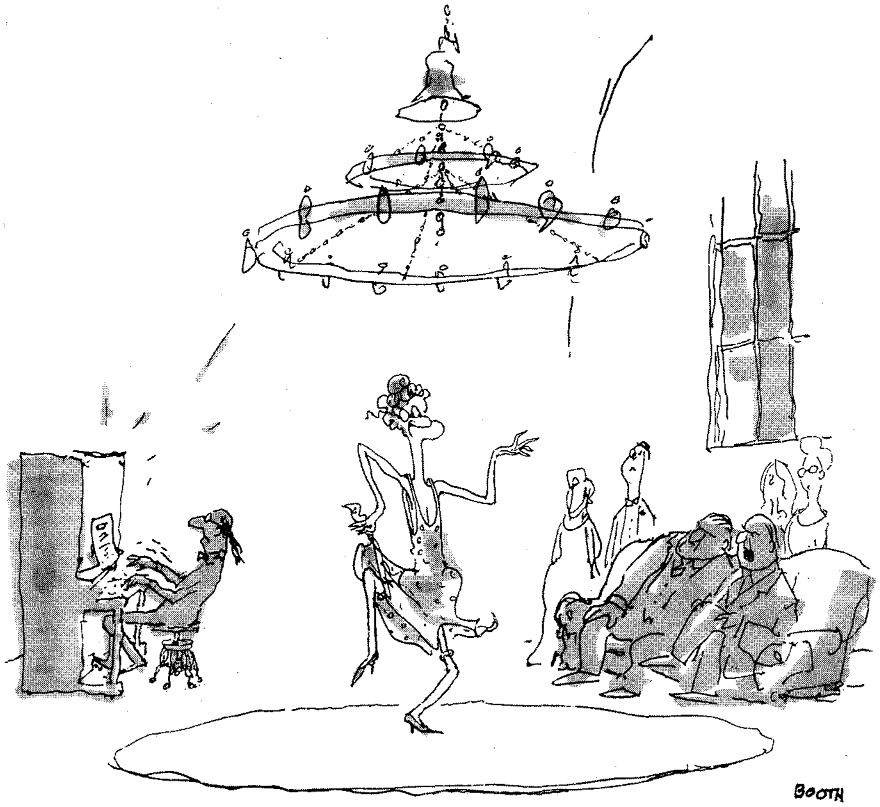
"Nothing," Giehler said.

What happened is that in 2000 a group of them went there for a show, and, because of a blizzard in New York, their art failed to arrive. To the astonishment of their hosts, they spent two sleepless days and nights prior to the opening in the gallery getting drunk and making new art. There was bad behavior all around. In the end, the original art work was found, but the legend of the young ruffians from New York had spread and the show was a rousing success.

"Nobody was thinking about the future, what role we were playing, how we were being perceived," Koenig recalled. "We were just doing whatever we wanted. It was as extravagant as can be." Nonetheless, he managed to turn decadence into something of a business proposition. In 2001, he left Brooklyn for Manhattan, moving to a space on lower Broadway that earned him a flash of new-kid renown but which was rendered unviable, almost as soon as it opened, by the attack on the World Trade Center, a few blocks away. At the end of that year, he relocated to Centre Street.

Koenig was determined to demonstrate independence. When he visited Cologne, he'd stay in a hotel room instead of at his father's house. When Kasper came to New York, Leo picked him up at the airport in a limousine. "He was like a kid in a movie," Kasper told me. "I said to him, 'Come on, now, it's a nice gesture, but once is a enough.' It had a naïve childishness to it, in a positive sense. It was almost depression of some kind, I guess."

"I was in a bad phase," Koenig says. He and the artists fancied themselves a kind of gang—part Cedar Tavern, part "Sopranos"—an aggressive interpretation of the old bohemian cliché. They had their own Mafia-style social club in Brooklyn, with shag carpeting, poker ta-



"Mrs. Porterhouse and her pianist have agreed to disagree."

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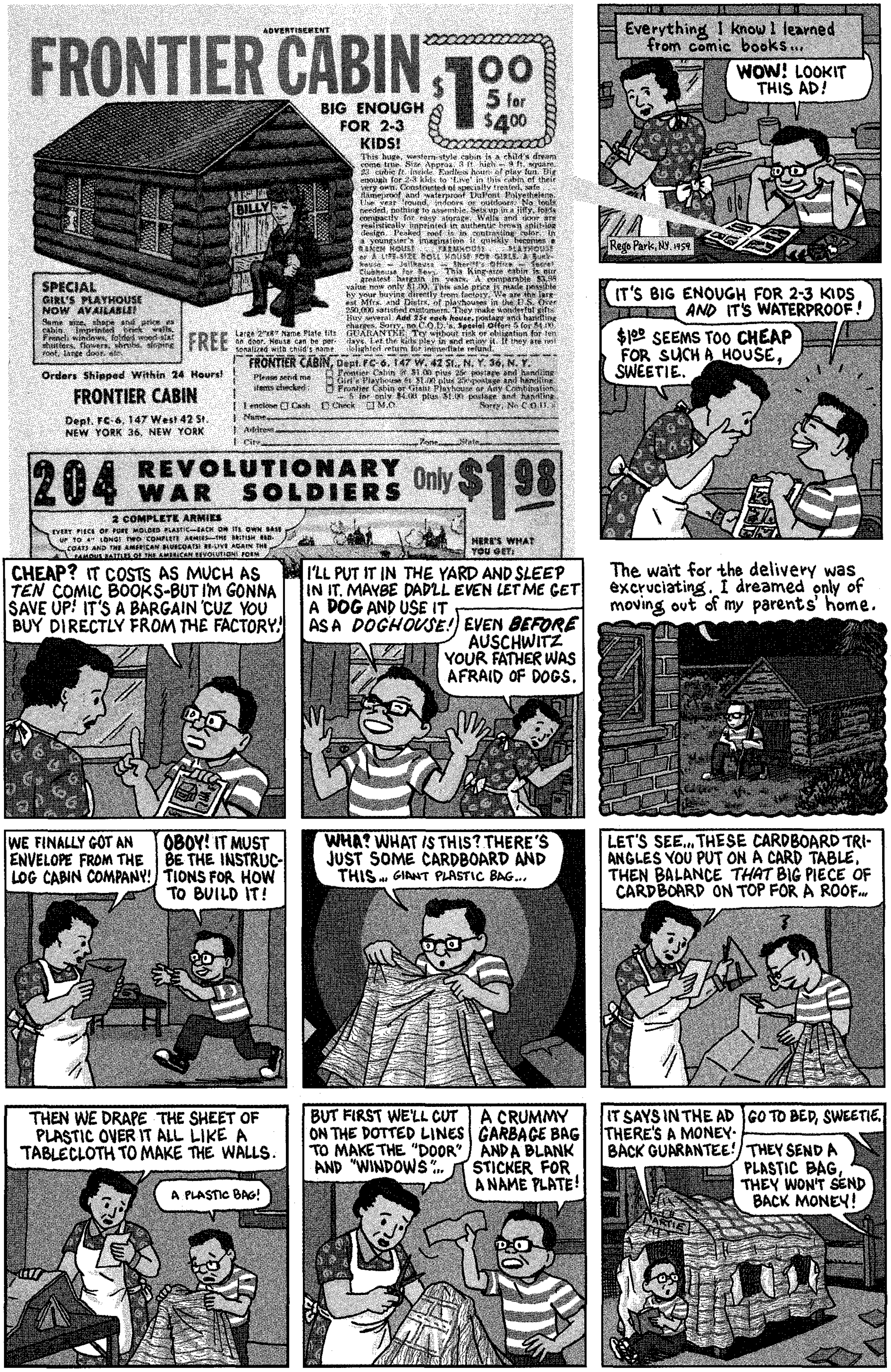
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ART SPIEGELMAN

bles, and a painting of a horse. One night in 2002, in a Williamsburg night club after the opening of a show by the painter Lisa Ruyter (the show was called "Follow the Boys" and consisted of paintings of Koenig and his artists, among others, hanging out in night clubs), Debora Warner, Leo's girlfriend, complained to the d.j.s about the music. One of them called her a bitch and may or may not have shoved her away. Koenig punched him, and Erik Parker's brother smashed a bottle of beer in his face. A week later, Koenig was arrested in his gallery and jailed for several hours. Though the charge of assault wasn't pursued, the d.j. sued Koenig and the Parkers, asking for eight million dollars. They settled for a tiny fraction of that. Parker gave Leo a painting to sell in order to cover his brother's share. Ruyter left the gallery. Inevitably, the incident inspired a work of art: Tom Sanford, a young Koenig artist, who usually depicts African-American hip-hop stars and basketball players (he is white), is making a painting of it, with a composition based loosely on Poussin's "Rape of the Sabine Women."

It also prompted introspection, on Koenig's part. "I felt obnoxious," Koenig told me. "My father called me a fat cat and a sneaker entrepreneur. I thought, That's not me." He went sober and arranged for an off-duty policeman to keep him out of trouble, or at least to keep trouble away from him. He learned, as he put it, "when to leave." He had his first drink—several drinks—eighteen months later at his father's wedding, in Germany, to Barbara Weiss, an art dealer. The next day, he missed his flight home and spent the morning in the airport, throwing up.

One of Koenig's newer and better-known artists is Alexis Rockman, who enjoyed some success in the eighties and nineties with his colorful and ecologically precise paintings of habitats altered by global warming. Rockman is forty-three, a fitness buff, a Democratic activist, a square with a crewcut. He grew up on the Upper East Side and spends his summers in Sag Harbor. He does not drink. He leaves early. But his sales had flagged, and earlier this year his gallery closed.

"I needed to find a youthful exuberance to put me back in the mix," Rockman told me. Sanford, his former studio assistant, introduced him to Koenig. Rockman was impressed by Koenig's ability to connect his artists with European collectors. "If he could do that with me, I'd be so psyched," he said. Within a few months, Koenig had sold an inventory of about a dozen of Rockman's older paintings. "His job is to sell art," Rockman said. "That's what he's done incredibly well."

Two months before the opening of the new gallery in Chelsea, Koenig took Tony Matelli, Torben Giehler, and a painter named Les Rogers to see the new space. Koenig was dressed in a worn light-gray chalk-striped suit, a purple shirt, and square-toed cream-colored loafers. Giehler had come from Brooklyn by bicycle. Koenig held open a sheaf of blueprints and surveyed the space: aluminum wall frames, sprayed-concrete walls, a poured-concrete floor. It is in a brand-new building, on a freshly anodyne stretch of streetfront, and is flanked, mallishly, by other galleries, to the east and west. Idiosyncrasy will be the art's job. The blueprints called for a large front room, a smaller back room, and, behind a pair of huge oak doors, a vast office for Koenig.

Koenig's movements were brisk, exaggeratedly optimistic. "This floor is awesome," he observed. He was especially proud of the gut work he'd had done in the ceiling. "I paid up the wazoo to run the shit pipes through that beam."

"Well, it feels like a gallery," Matelli said.

Giehler and Rogers expressed some misgivings about the proportions of the front room. They stood near the door and imagined their paintings on the opposite wall. "I think this is narrow," Giehler said.

"It's twice the size of the old gallery," Koenig said.

The perception of narrowness derived, in part, from the placement, across from the big wall, of a long, chest-high counter just inside the door, where the gallery's staff would sit. "Why not put the desk here?" Giehler said, indicating a sort of crawl space that would soon be closed off by sheetrock.

"You can't have your employees behind a wall," Koenig said.

"Why not?" Giehler said.

"Because they work for you and you want them to work well."

The artists walked in various directions, pacing off the dimensions. "What's the typeface on the door going to be?" Matelli asked. "Everyone in Chelsea uses the same sans-serif we're-a-fucking-business typeface. It's pretentious."

Koenig didn't answer him. He got on Giehler's bike and started riding in circles, circumscribing the space with big Butch Cassidy swoops. "This isn't one of the monster galleries of Chelsea," he observed cheerfully, "but that's a big wall." Another lap. "I think this is great," he said. His cell phone rang. "You get a good cell-phone signal in here, too—five bars, full coverage."

In March, at a time when Koenig was having trouble finding new artists to add to his stable, Tom Sanford recommended a friend named Kelli Williams. She was thirty-two and worked as a teller at a Citibank branch in SoHo. She had spent five years working on her six paintings. She was shy and a little strange. Koenig said that when he went to see the paintings he was flabbergasted. "They're like jewels," he told me. "I've brought collectors there, and they are foaming, just foaming. No one knows her, but there's a myth building." He began paying her to paint, so that she could quit her day job, pick up the pace, and build the myth.

"Once she's done these six paintings, we'll have a show," Koenig said. "She has never shown anywhere, which is great. The slate is clean for me. Now I can really go to work."

When I visited Williams's studio with Koenig, in an apartment in Ditmas Park, Brooklyn, the six paintings hung on three walls, in various stages of near-completion. They were small and painstaking—she uses a three-haired brush—surreal Boschean pornography in Renaissance landscapes. Williams has dyed-red hair, in a sort of wedged pageboy cut, and a wide-eyed look that somehow simultaneously conveys apprehension and assurance. Koenig went from painting to painting, inspecting each up close, pointing with a long finger at elements he did or did not like. Standing before one that was all but done, he suggested that she add a layer of varnish to it, to bring out the colors and give it a classical sheen.

"I tend to agree with you," she said. "But Tom's friend said don't varnish it. It'll look too retro."

"He's full of shit," Koenig said. Talk turned to deadlines and the timing of a solo show. "I think you should take as long as you need."

"I had a hard time getting work done in April," she explained, defensively. "I was upset in April." She told him that a French billionaire had offered to put her on salary and pay for health insurance in exchange for her work. She sent the collector an e-mail with legal disclaimers in it, which scared him off. Koenig told her that she'd done the right thing. "I'm O.K. being poor," Williams said. "I just don't want to be a failure."

Two months later, one of her paintings was hanging in the group show that opened Koenig's new gallery. It was seventeen inches by eighteen inches and depicted a contorted female figure whose breasts were where her buttocks should be. Koenig pronounced it a "masterpiece." He said, "The miniaturist style, the craft, the obsessive-compulsiveness is something I respond to." He told me that he had ten buyers who were interested in it, but that he could not bring himself to sell it. "I'm not there yet. It's not ready. It's my painting, anyway—I've been paying her for a year—and I want to own it for a little bit longer." As he said this he ran a finger along the top edge of it, a caress that ended with a flick at an imaginary bit of dust. "But she's going to want me to sell it, and Hubert Neumann is probably going to get it, just because I like him so much, and because he wants it the baddest. We're at twenty-five thousand dollars now, but I won't be comfortable until it's at fifty thousand."

When a dealer maintains a waiting list for an artist's work, it is not first come, first served. Collectors with whom the dealer has a standing relationship often take precedence. Surreptitious deals are cut; the sports term "future considerations" would be appropriate here. Dealers also prefer buyers whose ownership will burnish the artist's credentials; primacy generally goes to institutions, or to those who have private museums, and then to those whose collections are virtually museums unto themselves. When Koenig got a call about a Kelli Williams this summer from an adviser to the Los Angeles collector and television executive Dean Valentine, he said, "Straight to the top of the list!" He did the same for Steven Cohen, a publicity-shy hedge-fund billionaire who, in the past several years, has become a voracious collector of blue-chip art. Cohen's reputation is such that when he came calling, asking, as Koenig recalled, "if he was allowed to buy, I was thinking, Is this actually him or am I being set up here?" Eventually, Cohen bought a painting by a twenty-five-year-old Koenig painter named Justin Faunce, who had his first show in February, for twenty-five thousand dollars. "I generally buy only established artists," Cohen told Koenig.

In Koenig's case, the collector who best embodies the key attributes of familiarity and prominence is probably Hubert Neumann. Neumann lives on the Upper West Side, amid Picassos and Matisses that his father, Morton Neumann, a Chicago mail-order magnate (he made a fortune on beauty products), began collecting in 1948. Morton Neumann was dismissed early on by the art world as a coarse and gullible enthusiast, but in time he amassed one of the country's great collections of twentieth-century art. He died in 1985. Hubert Neumann, who is seventy-four, has been an avid collector for more than fifty years, having learned the same lesson his father did: that, when it comes to appraising art, other people are often wrong. Of Koenig's artists, he collects Tom Sanford, Erik Parker, and Christian Schumann. He is an unpretentious but argumentative man with a mustache and a Cheshire-cat grin who dresses in golf shirts and says "man" a lot. He doesn't let many people into his house to see his art. When I tried to invite myself over, Neumann told me to buy a book instead—"A Passion for Art," which has pictures of his collection. And when I asked him about the business of contemporary art, he delivered a mild scolding in the form of an hour-long lecture.

"There are as many stories about it as there are people involved," Neumann said. "It's a personal thing for me. If artists are emerging, it's got to be a personal experience with the work and the artist, and then with the dealer." He went on, "Leo's a special guy in his field. What makes him special, if you hang around this world and compare him to others, is—he's Leo. Leo is not interesting because of his father or his uncle or whatever. Basically, I think his father is a jerk. The reason Leo's interesting is that he's in a position to advance the cause of emerging art. Emerging art needs that kind of support. It's a flower that needs nourishment. It's a delicate and wonderful thing.

"The art world hasn't changed," he went on. "There will always be five or six great artists in a generation. The rest of them are just going to become dust, or different degrees of dust." Neumann objects to cynicism, and he made sure to point out, as we talked on the phone, that he was surrounded at that moment by works that had been dismissed by the world as peripheral at one point or another and that were now regarded as important. "It's a lot of baloney to be a dealer or a collector unless the art has a chance of being profound," he said. "And if the art work is profound, then the art market is irrelevant. That's what makes it magical." He cited the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and his contention that civilization is defined by three things: science, philosophy, and art. Of these, visual art is the only one that you can own or acquire. "That's why it's so special," Neumann said. "That's why you have all these people running around like ants in the art world. They're all running around thinking they understand what's profound. But they can't, because it's ephemeral." He went on, "What happens is people like to create myths. And they'll make a myth about Leo. And it may even have a substantial element of truth to it."

The bulk of the Baselitz collection arrived on these shores by air in August. It was moved to an art-storage facility on Eleventh Avenue, where the Halls maintain a fourteen-hundred-square-foot climate-controlled private space. On the last day of the month, the Halls came into town, from their home in Southport, Connecticut, to conduct some business with Koenig, and then the three of them went to check on the shipment. They were greeted at the storage facility by Oliver Stebich, an art

"We're waiting for the land to slide before we actually build on it."

• •

shipper and storer, who led them into a windowless white room skirted by thirteen paintings, which had been unpacked and propped against the wall. Stebich, Koenig, and an assistant donned white gloves and began delicately removing the thin layer of foam that protected each painting. Gradually, the room filled with angry color. The paintings—Penck, Polke, Kiefer, Immendorff, Lüpertz—were grim, crude, almost primitive, many of them featuring iconography relating to postwar Germany. A number of the Pencks had been smuggled from East Germany; one had been painted on an old woollen blanket. Hall and Koenig moved from painting to painting, elucidating motifs peculiar to each artist's oeuvre: painter's palettes in the Kiefers, eagles in the Immendorfs.

"I'm dazed," Koenig said.

"It's reassuring that (a), it all got here safely, and (b), it looks even better than it did at Derneburg," Andy Hall said. He drifted around the room, with a queasy grin that seemed to blend reverence for the work, pride of possession, and the anxiety of appreciating objects for which one has paid dearly. "They look better here," he said again.

"Every single one of them has a story," Koenig said to me. "They have significance."

"Four or five of these we'll bring to Southport," Hall said. "The Polke, that Penck, maybe this Penck, the Palermo, and one of those Kiefers."

After they had lingered awhile, they rode the elevator to another floor, to visit the Halls' storage room. It contained, in addition to mousetraps, a thousand or so works in crates or in partial paper wrappings, on which the artists' names were written in ink: Beuys, Warhol, Twombly, Clemente, Fischl, Hockney, Rivers, Hirst. Also, some from Koenig: Giehler, Parker, Nitsche, Rogers, Faunce.

"This is criminal, keeping all this in storage," Christine said, with a sigh.

"Wow, we have great stuff," Hall said, mostly to himself.

On the Friday after Labor Day, Koenig had an opening at his new gallery: eight paintings by Frank Nitsche. It was a grand opening, of a kind, since the first show there, a group exhibition featuring most of his artists, had débuted in the middle of the summer, at a time when the art world, true to its European roots and aspirations, had cleared out of the city. At 5 P.M., an hour before the Nitsche opening, the town cars started pulling up, one after the other, fifteen minutes apart, as though by prior arrangement. For Koenig, the paintings already had names attached. "I had certain people in mind, even if they didn't know it," he said. By seven, most of the big buyers had come and gone, and six of the eight paintings were sold. Koenig hoped to sell one of the remaining two to a museum. A young dot-com entrepreneur named James Healy, a regular customer whom Koenig referred to as a "triggerman," took a liking to the other. Healy overheard a few collectors asking Koenig if he'd hold it in reserve for them. Koenig would not. Healy stepped in and pulled the trigger. The preliminary enthusiasm of others, tepid or insincere as it may have been, was affirmation enough.

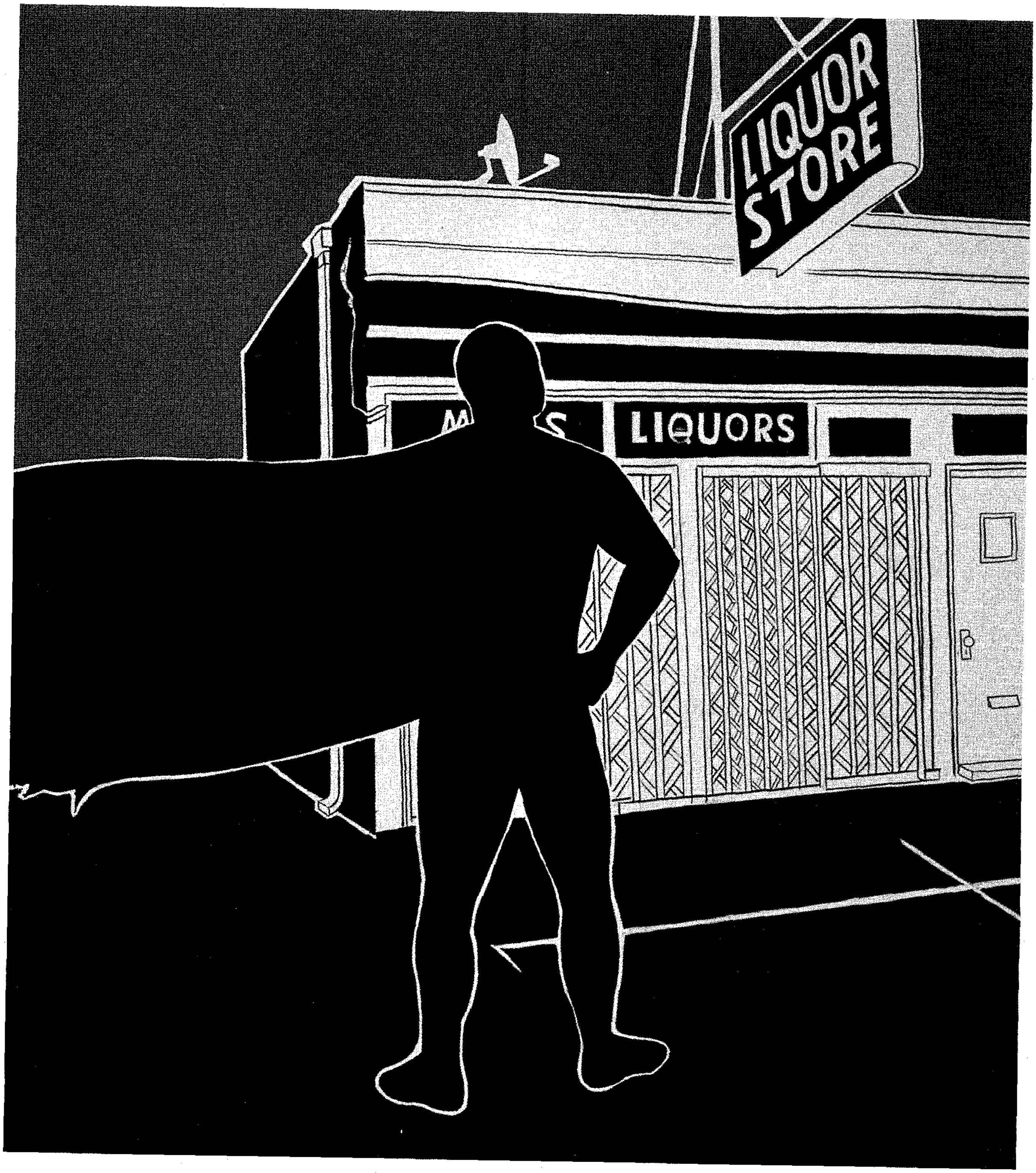
It seemed that most of the people in the gallery at this point were artists, including Matelli, recently returned from Copenhagen, where he'd sold his babygrand "Fucked" for a hundred and ten thousand dollars, and Bareikis, recently returned from Zurich, where his installation "Straight to the Top I'll Take…" had sold for sixty thousand dollars. Bareikis's time abroad had been miserable. He had got four tick bites in Germany, and had been put on a course of antibiotics and forbidden to drink alcohol. "It was a nightmare," he said, looking a little shaky.

A celebratory dinner was held at Arqua, an Italian restaurant in Tribeca—an odd choice, in these frothy times, because during the art boom of the eighties it had been a sort of headquarters for the likes of David Salle and Julian Schnabel, whose declining reputations, fairly or not, have become cautionary tales. Koenig had reserved five tables of eight in back, mostly for his artists, though a few collectors, such as the Halls, who'd bought two of the Nitsches, and Hubert Neumann, who'd bought nothing, were there, too. Koenig stood to toast Nitsche. Andy Hall stood to toast the gallery. Finally, Nicole Eisenman paid tribute to Koenig, with a few remarks about how the gallery felt like a family and how grateful the artists were for that. Koenig started crying but recovered himself quickly. It was eleven, and the night was looking long. Six hours later, he was in Williamsburg, at May's, watching five women dance on top of a bar. ♦

FICTION

PATH LIGHTS

BY TOM DRURY


LIQUOR STORE
M S
LIQUORS

One day, a bottle almost hits us. It's a brown quart bottle that falls out of the sky. We are in the arroyo, the dogs and me, walking.

They look at the bottle; they look at me. My first guess is that somebody threw it down from the rim of the arroyo. But then it would have bounced down the slope—it wouldn't have stopped dead like this.

I think of the pilot tossing a Coke bottle from a plane in the movie "The Gods Must Be Crazy." But, as a detective once told me, "Most of the time, we find that the thing that probably happened? Is the thing that did happen."

So eventually I turn around and see the San Rafael Bridge—which I just walked under, so I shouldn't be surprised that it's there—and then I understand what must have happened.

Because you might not know. You might drive across the bridge and toss a bottle over the rail never guessing that people walk and ride horses below. Or you might say to yourself, "This bottle could fall to the bottom of the arroyo and hit someone in the head, which is O.K. by me."

The dogs want to get going. Either they've already forgotten the bottle or they're worried that another one might be on the way. But I tell them to stay, and I pick up the bottle and hold it in the sunlight. It's empty but still cold. Blind Street Ale is what it held.

I wonder what the dogs would have done if the bottle had knocked me out. Perhaps they would have stood by until I woke up, as Lassie would have if Jeff, or later Timmy, had been hit by a beer bottle. It's just as likely, though, that they'd have run off into the trees. Because they have their own agendas. Tag's a wire-haired Jack Russell whose life mission is to create an empire of the places where he has peed. Raleigh is a very small beagle with round golden eyes and enormous ears—homely, yet somehow profound. Her goal is to follow every odd scent she comes across—and there are, it seems, a lot of them—slowly and at length. Sometimes Tag will pee, and Raleigh will want to stop and smell *that*, and I'll think, or even say out loud, "Well, kids, we're not going to get anywhere at this rate."

DETAIL: STEVE POWERS, "BREAKFAST REVIVAL" (2004) FROM "FIRST AND FIFTEENTH"/VILLARD BOOKS

Now we head home, where the A.C. is cranking, the blinds are down in the bedroom, and Ingrid has the blanket pulled up to her chin. She's an aerospace engineer in La Cañada and the spacecraft Phaethon has just landed on Mars. The reason for the mission is secret—she can't tell anyone what it's about, not even me.

She tends to get migraines every time some phase of her work comes to an end. I sit on the edge of the bed and put my hand on her forehead. Her hair is damp but her skin is cool.

"How was your walk?" she says, without opening her eyes.

"It was O.K.," I say.

"This is the worst part," she says. "I think it'll break soon."

"Do you want some Coke?"

"It's all gone."

"Coffee?"

"Gone."

So I run hot water on a washcloth, wring it out, and carry it back to the bedroom. I lay it on her forehead and press down.

"You're an angel," she says.

"No, you are. Everybody else is celebrating and here you are. It's not fair."

"I'm not worried about that, Bobby," she says. "I can celebrate another time."

We have lived in California for three years and Ingrid likes the state very much. She was born on a farm in South Dakota. It's abandoned now. Every few years, Ingrid goes back to take a look, even though all that's left is the old bleached shell of a house, surrounded by blue grama grass and tall trees with pale bark and waxy leaves. You can't go upstairs anymore, because the steps have crumbled, but you can still stand outside and look up at her old bedroom window.

Starbucks coffee is good for Ingrid's headaches, so I head back out to buy her the biggest one they have. Then I drive to the liquor store on DeLacey and buy two litres of Coke.

"Just soda tonight?" Mr. King says.

He is short and round with a red face and bright eyes. We like him, and his liquor store. We always get him a scarf or something at Christmas, because even in Southern California you sometimes need a scarf.

"Do you carry Blind Street Ale?" I ask.

Mr. King nods. "We hardly sell any of it, but we do have it. It's strong, and it's twelve bucks a quart."

"Anyone buy some lately?"

"I don't know. Why?"

I tell him what happened in the arroyo.

He shakes his head and looks disappointed in humanity. "I never heard of such a thing."

"My idea," I say, "is to figure out who did it and talk to them. Not angry, necessarily, but just so they know."

"Quite right," Mr. King says. "Prevent it from happening again."

"I figure I might be able to—find them, I mean—because it's such an obscure brand."

"I've tasted it," he says. "It's obscure for a reason."

"Maybe I'll try some."

It's dark by the time I get home. We live on a winding street with houses on one side, opposite a steep dense bank of ivy. All the houses have path lights in the grass. I really like them for some reason, these low modest lanterns lighting up when night comes down.

Tag and Raleigh are lying on the kitchen table looking out the window when I drive up. Tag stands and wags his tail so hard that the table shakes, and he yodels as he always does when he sees someone he knows outside. If he doesn't know you, his reaction is much worse. Once, a dog trainer came to the house, and he said, "Tag is not aggressive; he's just got a tremendous amount of adrenaline."

I take the coffee in and set it on Ingrid's night table. She's snoring lightly, but when she wakes up she'll be glad to see it, hot or cold.

Then I go back to the kitchen, open the bottle of Blind Street, and pour some into a heavy glass goblet sort of thing. There isn't much foam, which I take to mean that the bottle sat on the shelf for a long time.

The ale is flowery, with a tranquillizing undercurrent. I drink it while reading the newspaper in the dining room. After two glasses, I'm sort of drunk. Gravity comes alive—I can feel it on my arms and shoulders, pulling me down.

Ingrid comes out of the bedroom now with her coffee. She sits at the table and plucks the collar of her shirt from her neck with both hands. She has straight brown hair parted in the middle and dark crescent eyes and a full lower lip that gives a strong sense of composure to her face.

"I feel better," she says.

"Thank God," I say.

And I mean it. I hate it when she's sick. The house gets all dark and quiet—it's as if time had ceased to function.

"Not dizzy anymore," she says.

"Let's play cards," I suggest.

"What are you drinking?"

I explain about the bottle and the bridge.

"I don't get it," she says. "You pick up some bottle off the ground and now you're drinking from it?"

"No. Hell no. I got this at Mr. King's."

"What's it like?"

"I think you'd say it was complex."

"Good old Mr. King," Ingrid says.

We play three hands of Russian bank. She shuffles the cards one-handed. I don't know how she can do this, but she can.

"I could've been killed by that bottle," I say.

"Nothing can happen to you," she says. "You're the voice of Milo Hahn."

This is a reference to my work. I read out loud in a recording studio for a living. Commercials, books on tape, a few other things. Once, I even did the voice-activated response system for a tree-service conglomerate. "Do you want *one* tree planted? Say yes or no. Do you want *more than* one tree planted? Say yes or no. Do you want *one* tree removed?" And so on. Tedious to record, let alone to hear on the phone, I'm sure. I have no doubt that voice-activated response systems are making the nation a dumber place, but the money was very good.

I also do the Milo Hahn mysteries. Milo Hahn is a private investigator who travels around the United States in a camper pickup unravelling sordid deals. That's why I talked to the detective I mentioned before—to get some background. Not that I really needed it just to read the books. The author writes three a year, and the titles are all plays on state slogans. Alaska was "Beyond Your Dreams, Within Your Nightmares," Connecticut "Full of Deadly Surprises."

Usually, I record at a studio in Glendale. If Martians were to land here and build their conception of an Earth city, I suspect it would look like Glendale: the open streets, the trees that line up a little too well, the eccentric and vaguely futuristic architecture.

Today I'm finishing "It Must Be Murder," a mystery set in Maine. It concerns a woman who wants Milo to find her son. Only he's not really her son, as it turns out, but one of the world's most ingenious cocaine thieves—until, that is, his corpse washes up on a rock, where seals keep trying to shove it off, which you can understand, because it is their habitat.

"I used to be happy," I read. This is Milo talking to himself at the end of the book. "I'd roll into town, grill a steak, drink some Lagavulin, and watch the sun go down. Now I don't know. Now I can't chase out of my mind the crazy lies that people convince themselves of and then try to sell me. And for what? So that I'll find the answers? Make their stories true? Are you kidding me? There ain't no answers, people—that's what I want to say. No answers, no true stories. There's only the highway and a full tank of gas and a call on my cell phone from some guy in Baltimore, who's got a bit of a nasty problem and thinks maybe I can help. And the hell of it is, maybe I can."

(The reference to Baltimore, see, will direct the audience to the next book, set in Maryland. The series goes in alphabetical order.)

I look up. Terry Finn is on the other side of the glass. He runs the sound board and lines up the jobs. He got into an accident last spring while riding his motorcycle on the Angeles Crest Highway, and had to have reconstructive surgery on his shoulder. Now he can't lift his left arm over his head.

"You nailed it, Bobby," he says. "Morose, yet optimistic. Only it was just maybe a little too fast."

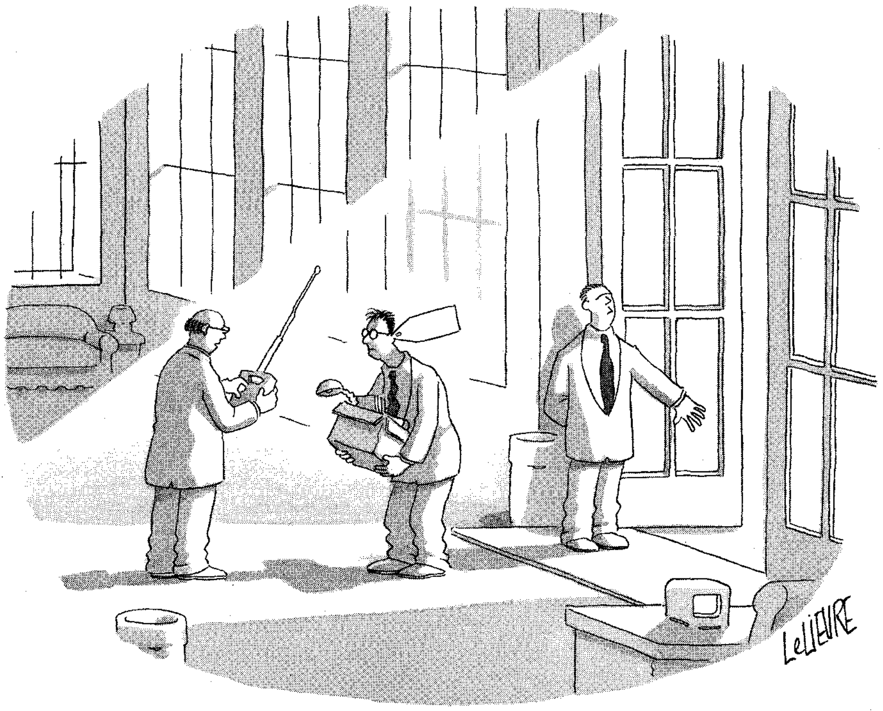
"Oh, you always say that," I tell him.

"Well, you always rush the ending."

"You know, this is in your mind. You hear what you want to hear."

"Hey," he says, "I wish I did."

This is what Milo Hahn would do about the bottle of Blind Street Ale. He would set a fire in the Dumpster at Mr. King's liquor store, and while everybody was outside trying to put it out he would rifle through the records. Milo Hahn is a master of rifling, and a combustion expert; he's constantly setting diversionary fires. When he found what he was looking for, he would rip it out of the ledger. (This is what I find troubling about the books: Milo always finds what he needs to find; in life, when you look for things, you're usually looking in the wrong place.) Later, Mr. King would probably turn up



"We don't fire people here, Thompson, we tag them and release them into the wild."

AUSTRIA CELEBRATES THE GENIUS!
MOZART 2006 250th ANNIVERSARY
NIKOLAUS HARNONCOURT
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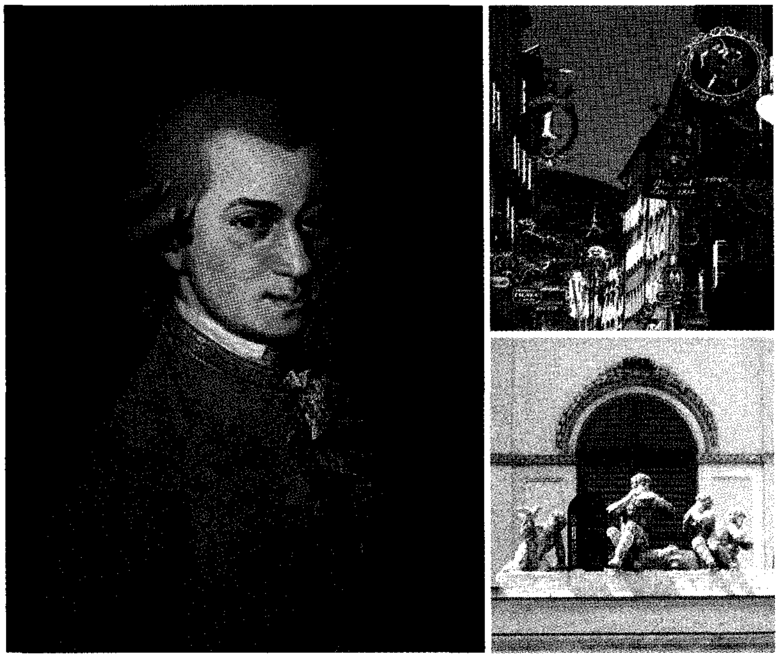

HAPPY BIRTHDAY! MR. MOZART!

Along with the whole world, Austria will celebrate Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's 250th birth anniversary throughout 2006. In the thirty-five short years of his life, the prodigy, whose music was once described by conductor Bruno Walter as "next to God," composed more than six hundred known works from serenatas and symphonies, to oratorios, concertos, and operas.

The cities of Vienna and Salzburg have created an impressive year-round festival program. His native city Salzburg will celebrate the momentous occasion, where over a span of nearly six weeks, all the musical genius's twenty-two works composed for the stage will be presented during the Salzburg Festival, among other events planned.

Not surprisingly, Vienna, where Mozart maintained residence and composed many of his most significant works, will commemorate his anniversary with the New Crowned Hope Festival comprised of new commissions. An abridged program of these two great cities' festivities follows. ●

TRACING THE STEPS OF A GENIUS

- **Austrian Airlines** offers City Steal packages to the Mozart cities of Vienna and Salzburg. For more information, call Austrian Air Vacations **800-790-4682**.
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Mozart Year 2006 Highlights

New Year's Concert
Symphony No. 41 in C Major K. 551 ("Jupiter")
Großes Festspielhaus, Salzburg

All year on Sundays and public holidays
Mozart masses at Salzburg Cathedral, St. Peter's Abbey, Franciscan Church, and Pilgrimage Church

January 8–December 12, 2006 – Vienna Volksoper
"The Magic Flute"
"The Marriage of Figaro"
"La clemenza di Tito"
"Don Giovanni"
"Così fan tutte"
Mozart Soiree

January 10–December 5, 2006 - Vienna State Opera
"Così fan tutte"
"Don Giovanni"
"The Magic Flute"
"The Marriage of Figaro"
Requiem Mass in D minor K. 626

January 20–February 5, 2006 – Salzburg International Mozart Week
"La finta giardiniera"
Orchestral concerts, chamber concerts, solo recitals

January 21–December 26, 2006 - Landestheater Salzburg
"La finta giardiniera"
"The Magic Flute"

Daily from January 27, 2006
Mozarthaus, Vienna

January 27, 2006–January 7, 2007
"Viva! Mozart" exhibition, Salzburg

January 27, 2006–January 7, 2007
Mozart films, Salzburg Museum

February–November, 2006
"The Best of Mozart" concert series, Salzburg

March 17–September 17, 2006
"Mozart 2006" exhibition at the Albertina, Vienna

April–November 2006
Special Exhibition on Mozart's church music
Cathedral Museum, Salzburg

May 7–June 18, 2006
Vienna Festival concerts

May 12–June 18, 2006
Vienna Festival, Rathausplatz
"The Magic Flute"
"Così fan tutte"

June 2–5, 2006
Salzburg Festival – Whitsun + Baroque –"Approaching Mozart"

July 1–September 3, 2006
Mozart films on City Hall Square, Vienna

July 23–August 31, 2006
All Mozart's operas at the Salzburg Festival

October–December 2006
"New Crowned Hope" Festival, Vienna

October 22–November 11, 2006
Sacred Music Festival, Salzburg

Visit mozart2006.net for more information.

MOZART 2006 250th ANNIVERSARY

murdered, which would tip Milo off to the fact that the case was more complicated than it had at first appeared.

Terry says, "Just read from the break."

So I do.

" 'Here's your money,' Mrs. Cahill tells me. She's wearing an astrakhan jacket in the parking lot of an Arby's and not looking too much at home. 'And a little something for your college fund.'

"It's a stack of hundreds, the fresh kind, sharp as a razor, coated with the bitter powder of the vault.

" 'I guess this seals the deal,' I say. It's a crummy joke and I don't care if she gets it or not.

"But she does, all right. She gets it. Her eyes flash like the tail-lights of a Maserati Spyder fresh off the lot, cash on the barrel, no questions asked.

" 'Don't press your luck, Mr. Hahn,' she says. 'Someday it might press back.' "

Rosemary, the herb, grows around one of the trees in our front yard, and a couple of nights later I'm cutting it back. We cook with the stuff, but you can't really cook fast enough to keep up with the growth of rosemary. The dogs are on long leads that aren't tied to anything, but they don't realize that, so they're just hanging around. The phone rings and I go inside. It's Ingrid.

"Where are you?" I ask.

"My Place." That's what she calls Mi Piace, in Old Town. It's a big, open restaurant with white tablecloths and vast cold Martinis.

"Go ahead and eat," she says. "We haven't even ordered, so it'll be a couple of hours."

"You're celebrating," I say.

"The Phaethon has landed."

"Another one?"

"No, the same one."

"What's it doing?" I figure she might tell me, since she sounds a little looped.

"It's talking."

"Oh yeah? To who?"

"I've said too much already."

I tell her to call me when she wants to come home, and I put the phone down, though the rosemary resin on my fingers makes them stick to the receiver.

When I go back outside, Raleigh is gone. Tag lies in the grass looking melancholy. His leash is wrapped around the A.D.T. Security sign. I put him in the house and go down the street calling for our mindless little beagle. Three houses away, I see her on the high cantilevered roof of someone's garage looking down at me with big yellow eyes. Because the houses on our block are built into ledges, this is not as great an accomplishment as it seems. Still, I'm impressed.

I walk the length of the garage, and in the short distance from the front to the back the yard climbs to a bank of ground cover that's flush with the roof. Raleigh seems surprised to see me on her level when I was down on the street a minute ago.

Luckily, no one comes out of the house. I rescue my dog and carry her home under my arm like a football.

An hour later, the phone rings again. It's Mr. King this time. Four bottles of the ale I was asking about went out this morning. He heard about it but didn't see it happen. He gives me the name and address on the check.

The mission seems a little specious now, but I don't mind having something to do. So I sit down at my desk and write:

> Dear Neighbors,
>
> Last Tuesday a bottle of Blind Street Ale was thrown from the San Rafael Bridge into the Arroyo Seco. As luck would have it, no harm was done. But the bottle barely missed a man and his dogs. Who can say what will happen next time? The arroyo is for the use and enjoyment of walkers and joggers and equestrians. It is almost one hundred per cent free of debris, either airborne or stationary. Let's keep it that way.

I look the letter over and change the period after the last sentence to an exclamation point.

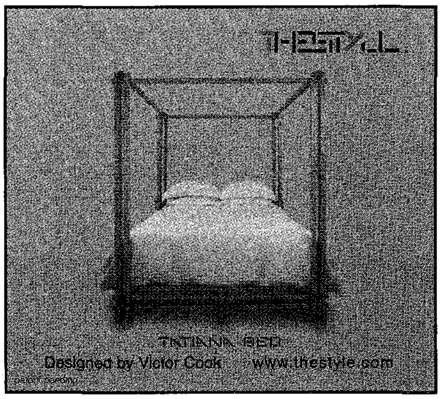
> Let's keep it that way!

It seems less hostile somehow.

Then I drive to the address Mr. King gave me, a house in a quiet neighborhood off Linda Vista. It's one of those big Craftsman places that seem to be perpetually under renovation. Scaffolding rises on all sides, giving the house the look of a great sailing ship in drydock.

I park near the mailbox and get out of the car and put the letter halfway in the slot so that whoever lives here will see it. While I'm doing this, a deep-green sports car—a Maserati, as it happens—comes around the corner and stops next to my car.

WHY IS FINDING THE ONE WHO'S RESPONSIBLE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY?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"Are you here about the environment?" the driver says. He is a man in his fifties, maybe, wearing a blue shirt with "Los Angeles Dodgers of Los Angeles" printed in white.

"No," I say. I take the letter from the mailbox and carry it over to him. "There was a . . . well, you can read it."

He begins to do so and then he looks up.

"My daughter drinks this Blind Street," he says.

Then he goes back to the letter.

"Where it says 'a man and his dogs,' would that be you?"

I nod. "Probably a lot of people drink it," I say. "It doesn't mean she was the one."

"One way to find out," he says. "She lives in the carriage house."

"Well, you can ask her."

"No, come along," he says. "She doesn't see that many people. It'll do her good."

We drive up to the house, then get out and walk around to a split-shake barn with an apartment upstairs. The path lights here are little Mission lanterns with sea-green brass and yellow mullioned glass. Very sharp. I tell him so.

The man turns with a pragmatic flatness to his mouth, as if he had just thought of something. His eyes are deep-set, his crewcut like iron filings.

"Do I know you?" he says.

"I don't think so."

"You seem familiar."

"Ever listen to the Milo Hahn mysteries on audio?"

"No, I'm not familiar with those," he says. "I know what it is. You work for those guys—the tree people."

"I'm the voice on their phone system. I don't really work for them."

"No kidding. You do voices." He nods, thinks this over. "That can be interesting, I imagine."

"Oh, it's like anything. Sometimes interesting, sometimes not."

"Can you do Jimmy Stewart?"

"No. I don't do voices that way."

"I know, I'm just kidding," he says. "I'm going to go see if she's around. But, whatever she says, don't get mad at her, all right? She can't stand that."

"You know, let's forget this," I say. "I don't want to bother your daughter."

"It's no bother." He turns toward the barn and half shouts the rest. "You've gone to the trouble to make a flyer and we're going to get to the bottom of this."

He goes inside and is in there for some time. I walk across the lawn to a gazebo where there's an easel and a painting. The painting is dark and hard to figure out, but as I look closer I see that it must be the yard as it appears at night. The paint has been applied in thick slabs of black and midnight blue and it looks wet, as an oil painting in a museum might. I touch it—I've always wanted to do this—and I find that it is, in fact, still wet. I leave the gazebo and wipe my fingers on some ferns.

They're still in the carriage house. Raised voices bump like bats at the windows, but I can't hear anything specific. Don't get mad at her, you said so yourself, I think. I figure that Ingrid's probably calling me to come and get her by now, and here I've wandered into this weird family scene. Then the door opens.

She's older than I expected. Late twenties or more, I'd guess, in a stringy sweater with red and white stripes, overlong sleeves, and one of those collars whose points sit way out on the shoulders. Her fingers clamp the cuffs of the sweater to the palms of her hands. Her nails are short and jagged, and from the marks around them I determine that she is the night painter.

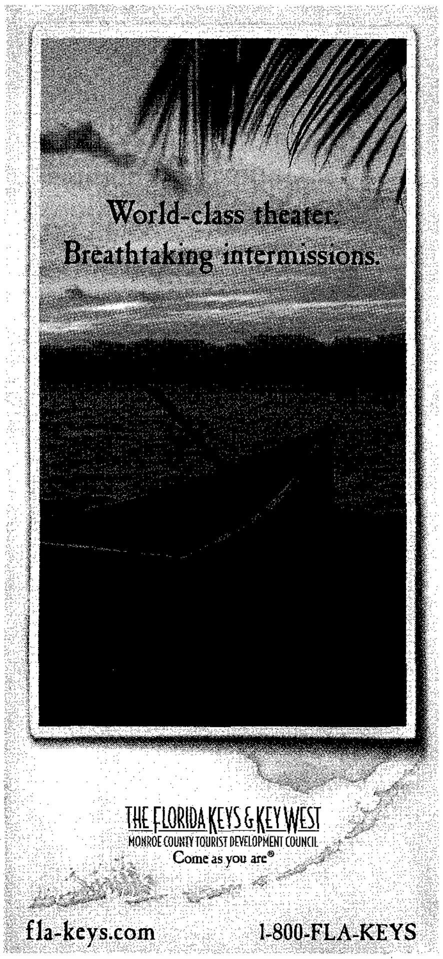
"I dreamed that God came and said it was time for me to go," she says.

There is a wooden bench nearby with a blue-handled garden shovel leaning against the seat. The father goes over and picks up the shovel and lays it on the bench. Then he picks it up again and puts it on the grass under the bench.

"Is that how we said we'd start?" he says.

Her eyes close, press tight, and open. She chews on her thumbnail and looks at me with red-rimmed eyes the color of slate.

"I'm sorry," she says. "I never thought it might hit someone. I'd had a really bad day. That doesn't excuse it, I know. See, because I dreamed that God came into my room like the mailman, and he had these orders for me in his pouch, and he said that I would die. And I said, 'But I'm young,' and he said, 'In your heart, you are not all that young.' I woke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Dd

up crying, I couldn't stop, because it seemed so *real*."

"Mariana," the father says.

"But I don't mean to lay all that on you. Then I drove around drinking Blind Street in the sun, and I threw the bottle out when it was empty, and I drove all the way to Zuma, and walked up and down on the sand, listening to the water, and then I came back. And I felt good then, better than I had in a long time. Because I thought, You know, I'm not going anywhere. And I never thought for a minute about anyone in the arroyo."

"Though you should have," the father says.

"Yes. I should."

"And?"

She rolls her eyes and breathes out so forcefully that the wings of her nostrils flare. "And *will*, in the future."

"Because you'll . . . what will you do?"

"Think." She nods her head. "I will think."

"Look, it's not the end of the world," I say. "It's just a bottle. We've all thrown bottles out of cars, I'm sure, at one time or another. That doesn't make you a bad person."

"You don't know me," she says.

"No, that's for sure. But you're honest. You could've said, 'Me? I didn't do anything.' A lot of people would have said that. And that counts for something. Now, I think I've made too much of this, and I have to go."

Mariana takes my hand in both of hers. "My apologies again," she says.

From their house I drive straight to Mi Piace. Ingrid and her pals are at a cluttered table in the back. I know them; they know me. There are plates and glasses and cups and saucers all mixed up on the table, and they've pushed back their chairs because the meal is over. The help hovers nearby, dressed in black.

"Where you been, man?" Ingrid says. "I called you. Come sit by me. What's wrong? You look like you've seen the ghost of Jacob Marley."

I pull up a chair. "I found out who threw that bottle," I say.

"You and that bottle, my God," she says. "It's like your constant companion."

"What bottle is this?" Else Nelson, the director of the team, says.

"Oh, somebody threw a bottle at Bobby in the arroyo. It's all he thinks about."

"Who threw it?"

"A woman," I say.

"Why?" Else says.

I look at him. For a scientist, he looks sort of ramshackle: unshaven, jowly, with the mysterious light of extreme knowledge in his eyes.

"You tell me what you're doing on Mars," I say, "and I'll tell you why she threw the bottle." ♦

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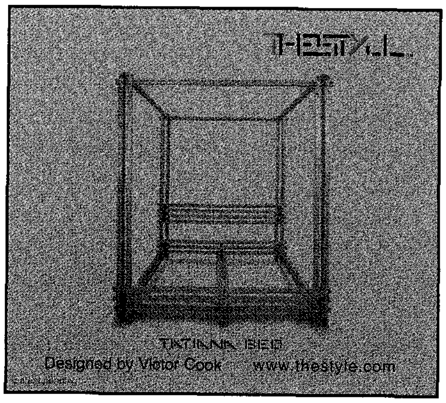
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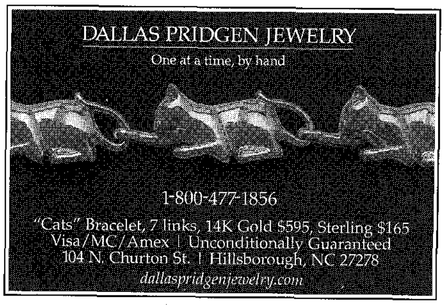
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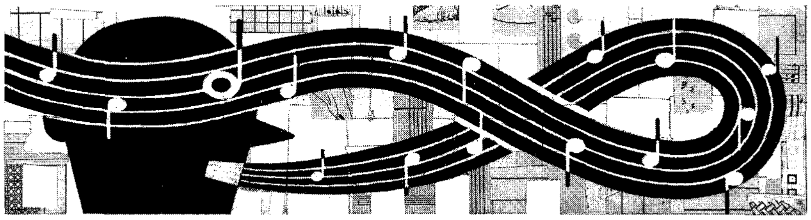


BOOKS

WORDS AND PICTURES

Graphic novels come of age.

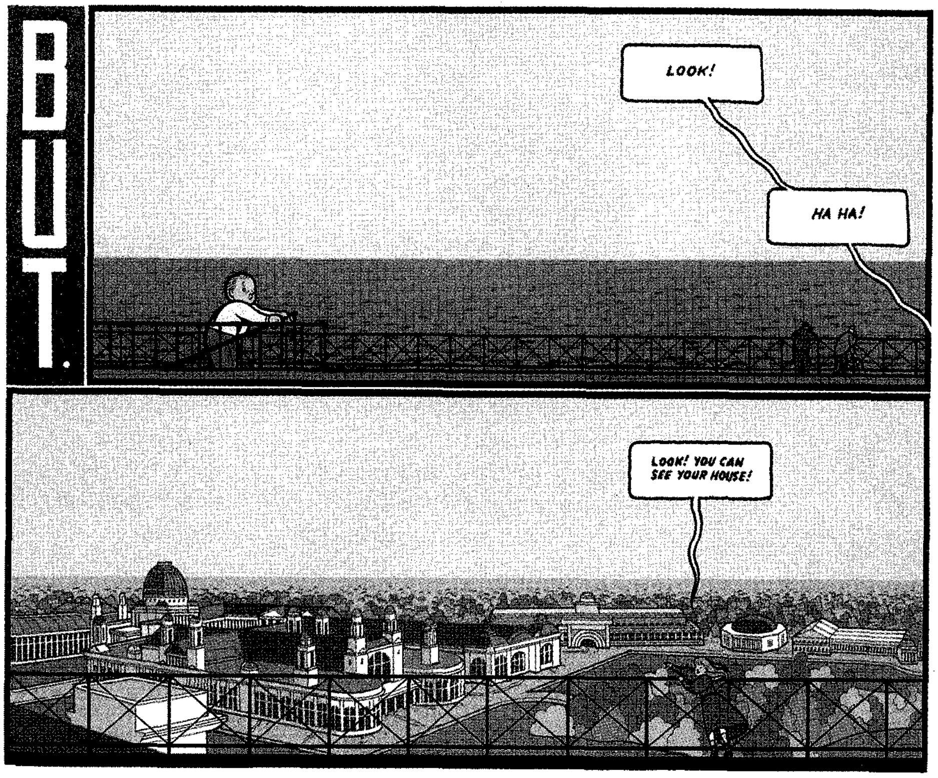
BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

You can tell the graphic-novels section in a bookstore from afar, by the young bodies sprawled around it like casualties of a localized disaster. There were about a dozen of them at the Barnes & Noble at Union Square one recent afternoon, in a broad aisle between graphic novels and poetry. Not one was reading poetry, but the proximity of the old ragged-right-margined medium piqued me. Graphic novels—pumped-up comics—are to many in their teens and twenties what poetry once was, before bare words lost their cachet. The nineteen-sixties decided that poet types would thenceforth wield guitars; the eighties imposed percussive rhythm and rhyme; the two-thousands favor drawing pens. Like life-changing poetry of yore, graphic novels are a young person's art, demanding and rewarding mental flexibility and nervous stamina. Consuming them—toggling for hours between the incommensurable functions of reading and looking—is taxing. The difficulty of graphic novels limits their potential audience, in contrast to the blissfully easeful, still all-conquering movies, but that is not a debility; rather, it gives them the opalescent sheen of avant-gardism. Avant-gardes are always cults of difficulty—Cubism, "The Waste Land"—by which a rising generation exploits its biological advantages, of animal health and superabundant brain cells, to confound the galling wisdom and demoralize the obnoxious sovereignty of age.

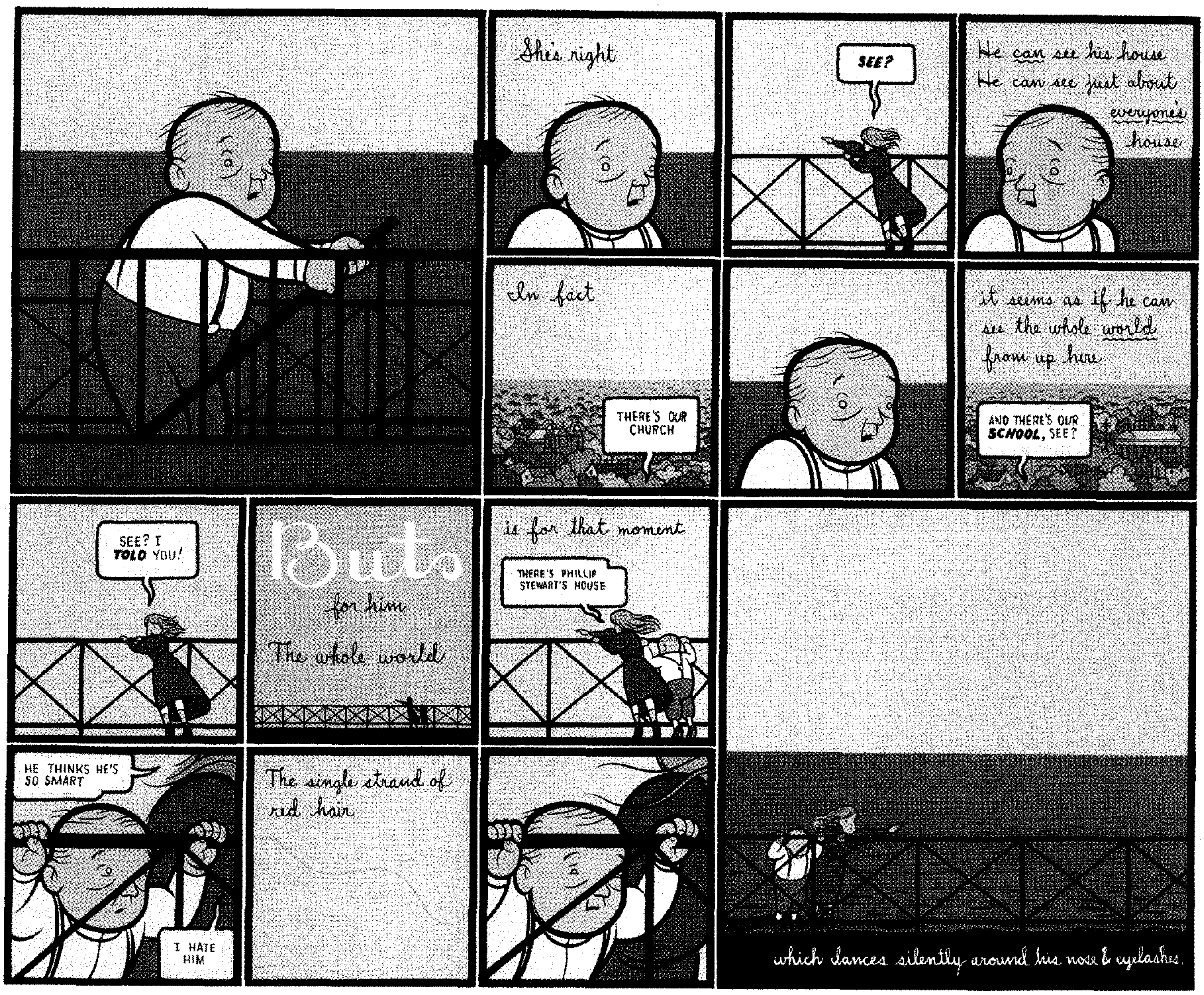
Start with Chris Ware, the thirty-seven-year-old Chicagoan Picasso/Braque and young Eliot of graphic novels, whose "Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth" (2000, Pantheon) is, besides being viciously depressing, the first formal masterpiece of a medium that he has proved to be unexpectedly complex and fertile. Set aside, for now, the graphic novelists you probably most like, if you like only a few: Art Spiegelman, Marjane Satrapi, Daniel Clowes. Their peculiar literary qualities are distracting. The same goes for Robert Crumb, for whom there is the added problem of a historical significance: he is the father of art comics. Keep lightly in mind the ever-teeming regions of genre: superhero, action, horror, goth-girl. Give a respectful but wide berth to Japanese manga, which occupy most of the shelf space allotted to graphic novels in bookstores, their bindings as uniform as lined-up vials of generic, obviously addictive pharmaceuticals. Dutifully paging, right to left, through a score or so of translated manga, I register the buzz of platter-eyed characters engaged in well-designed, pointless violence. I pause at frames in which, amid suddenly silent ruins, some liquid or another drips with a sound that is invariably rendered *plp plp plp*. It's not that styles of sheer sensation are contemptible, but once you've said "Wow," you are close to having exhausted the subject. It is even a point of honor with action comics—as with action movies and action anything, like roller coasters—to leave us with only a suffusive, endorphin glow. As for the dizzying byways of shojo, kinky romance manga for girls, I throw up my hands in Caucasian senior-male bewilderment.

"Jimmy Corrigan" tells of a potato-headed, hypersensitive office worker—"a lonely, emotionally-impaired human castaway," the author terms him—who lacks any notable personal resource except a limitless capacity for mental suffering. Several interlocking stories, many of which involve the miserable eighteen-nineties childhood of Jimmy's doppelgänger grandfather, center on Jimmy's first meeting, at the age of thirty-six, with his absentee father, a figure of crushing banality. (Jimmy's mother, who lives in a retirement home, is a monster of self-absorption.) Ware's visual style recalls the clean-lined perfectionism of "Tintin," the classic adventure strip by the Belgian Hergé (Georges Rémi, 1907-83), whose book-length stories qualify as graphic novels *avant la lettre*, but it is far more varied in design, with densely rhythmic layouts of small and large panels and of close-up and long views, and it is subtler in color, with moody, volatile pastels. Ware exercises an encyclopedic command of literary and cinematic tactics—stream of consciousness, montage—with tropes that are peculiar to graphic art: often effects of stillness, such as a character's blank takes, in which you sense mental wheels turning (never to any very propitious end, in this case), and landscapes and cityscapes infused with a droning dailiness. He speeds and slows time, stops it, and can even seem to run it backward, revisiting and revising recent events, or sideways, incorporating alternative accounts of what's happening. All this is done with utmost precision. Reading "Jimmy Corrigan" is like operating an intricate machine whose function is not immediately apparent. Gradually, meanings emerge and emotions crystallize. None gladden. Let one gross example stand for the book's innumerable bummers: Jimmy wanders outdoors, struggling to compose, in his mind, his first-ever letter to his father. ("Dear Dad, Hi! How are you? I'm your son..." "Dear Dad, Hi! My name is Jimmy. You might not

CHRIS WARE (2000)/COURTESY PANTHEON


BUT.
LOOK!
HA HA!
LOOK! YOU CAN SEE YOUR HOUSE!

"Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth" is, besides being viciously depressing, the first formal masterpiece of the genre.


She's right
SEE?
He can see his house
He can see just about everyone's house
In fact
THERE'S OUR CHURCH
it seems as if he can see the whole world from up here
AND THERE'S OUR SCHOOL, SEE?
SEE? I TOLD YOU!
Buts
for him
The whole world
is for that moment
THERE'S PHILLIP STEWART'S HOUSE
HE THINKS HE'S SO SMART
I HATE HIM
The single strand of red hair
which dances silently around his nose & eyelashes.

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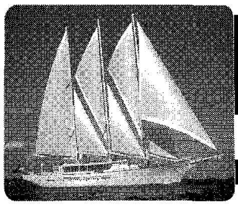

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MOSAIC OF A HARE, CORINIUM

The boats pulling in, the boats pulling out, the top-hat
commerce of the "infant century," crowds, crowds,
"the certainty of others," the bomb
that filled the air with horsehair and the ambulance after:

why wouldn't I hide in my little glass body? I have a clover sprig
made of glass to aspire to, with my glass appetite.
I raise certain questions about art and its relation to stasis,
yet I despise the formalists as naïve and ahistorical.

Here's my problem with America: this "would be" that obliterates
all other moods, playing over and over in people's heads,
the abstract optative that destiny works out.
I don't have the luxury to think in terms of destiny.

What nobody seems to get about me is, though you're made of glass
it doesn't mean you don't have appetites: I do. Or fears: I do.
The day the darkness took the whole basilica, I was afraid;
and equally afraid the day, centuries later, they switched the lights on.

Let rabbits think in terms of destiny: Whitman, the great
American rabbit poet, the rabbits in the government,
the rabbits that light and the ones that snuff out the fuse,
and all their pretty rabbit children, waiting to be casserole.

—*Dan Chiasson*

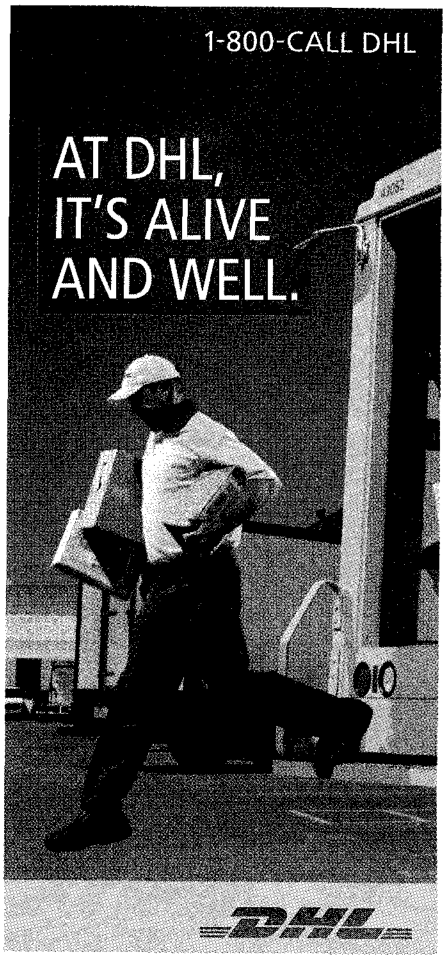
remember me, but…") A mail truck makes its rounds in the background. Jimmy sees deer behind a gas station across the street. After trying to remember whether deer bite, and assuring himself that they're harmless, he steps toward them, happily. The mail truck hits him.

The masochistic tenor of "Jimmy Corrigan," while extreme, is typical of serious graphic novels and, in fact, of most of the modern comic strips that influence graphic novelists, at least of the male kind. Comics heroines, from Little Orphan Annie to Wonder Woman, are as a rule resiliently upbeat, however beset. (In a preface to "Jimmy Corrigan," Ware issues a questionnaire that's meant to gauge the relative grimness of the reader's childhood. It begins, "1. You are a. male. b. female. If b, you may stop…") A painfully humiliated hero is essential even—or especially—to "Superman" and its vast spawn. Disregarded Clark Kent is the figure readers identify with; his transformation into the Man of Steel nurses the hopes and fulfills the rage of all underestimated boys, but it can't cure his loneliness. "Spider-Man" twists the knife by making Peter Parker's superpowers an added torment to him: he'd rather be an ordinary guy. The theme of a publicly misjudged character's private anguish has grown, in comics history, to dominate the form. Who today still relishes the pure ridicule of "Li'l Abner," or the convivial folk wisdom (brilliant wordplay aside) of "Pogo"? Both were immensely popular before the ascendance of "Peanuts," the most important comic strip of the past half century. Charlie Brown is Clark Kent without the colorful underwear, and with all the possibly compensatory qualities split off and given to other characters, mainly Snoopy. Jimmy Corrigan, in turn, is Charlie Brown without the eternal childhood in an Arcadian neighborhood. Ware teases out a nightmarish aspect of "Peanuts" that Charles Schulz cushioned in whimsy: Charlie Brown is incorrigibly mediocre, incapable of satisfactory relationships or achievements, doomed to obloquy. His generous and trusting heart sets him up for mishap and betrayal—which, in his little four-panelled world, where nothing changes, he meets with a sigh. Jimmy's world is big—Chicago's Sears Tower looms in misty silhouette outside his window—and events in it have consequences. They give him nosebleeds. They make him cry.

The influence of "Peanuts" pervades one variety of graphic novel, the influence of the early *MAD* magazine another. In 1964, Marshall McLuhan astutely called *MAD*, which first appeared in 1952, "a kind of newspaper mosaic of the ad as entertainment, and entertainment as a form of madness." Bill Gaines, Harvey Kurtzman, and the magazine's other inventors counterattacked the manipulative forms and messages of mass culture with a none too subtle parodic wit that was angry at its root. It fed a furious, slightly scared cynicism in its readers that was born of perceptions of falseness in advertising, certainly, and in perhaps, well, everything with which "they" presumed to know and affect our thoughts. What "they" imagined we must be like, to swallow it all, was caricatured in the sunnily moronic countenance of Alfred E. Neuman. *MAD* was almost as significant a cultural depth charge of the nineteen-fifties as Elvis was. (I came across my first issue in 1956 or so and immediately phoned two friends. All they heard on the line, before they hung up, was convulsive laughter.) Blending with the popularization of Beat literature and the comedy of Lenny Bruce, *MAD's* attitude entered into the great generational joke of the sixties: feigned idiocy, faux innocence, the put-on, camp. (Cogito: people over thirty don't get it, therefore I am.) Cartooning acquired a new, prevalently drug-enhanced function configuring madness as entertainment. Its new paragon—a writer-artist whose greatness still defies conventional description—was R. Crumb, who inaugurated "Zap Comix" in 1968 in San Francisco, at the center of a countercultural circus that was going rancid around the edges. Crumb regrounded comics in the experience of aging youths who, having embraced lives of antic alienation, were stuck with them.

Even full-on, Crumb's drawings tend to have an up-from-under feel. The fat shoes of the striding character in his iconic "Keep on Truckin'" image suggest a ground-level viewpoint, as does the physiognomy of his feminine ideal: girlish above the waist, rolling thunder below. (His unedifying sexual penchants and frankly jerkish attitudes are inseparable from the truths he tells, unfortunately.) Crumb's contributions to the physics of comics recall Giotto's (yes, Giotto's) to Western painting: acknowledging material mass and the force of gravity. In a Crumb, when something or someone falls the occasion doesn't require a helpfully lettered "thud," though he might provide one; feeling the weight, you register its impact. It's a small matter of emphasis with big correlatives, ushering comics from stylized backgrounds for fantasy to projections of tactile space. The effect needn't entail anything like realism. Its precedents include, in comics history, the topography of Coconino County, in George Herriman's "Krazy Kat" (1910-44). In that pocket immensity, as indifferent as the universe, a mouse might hit a cat with a brick, and a cat might enjoy it though a dog objects. After Crumb, a widespread rediscovery of Herriman became crucial to several styles of the nascent graphic novel, in particular that of Spiegelman's "Maus" (1986, Pantheon). The Jewish mice, German cats, and Polish pigs of that extraordinary epic live their fates in surroundings that not only contain but witness and reflect on the action: the kitchen in which Spiegelman interviews his father, a setting of safety in the here and now, emotionally frames the all but unbelievable ghastliness of the there and then. To become novelistic, comics needed capacious structures of space and time in which their characters could come and go.

Graphic novels induce an enveloping kind of emotional identification that makes them only too congenial to adolescent narcissism, in the writing no less than in the reading. Why arduously muster the persona of a Charlie Brown or a Jimmy Corrigan when your own fascinating self is right at hand? A problem for the autobiographical graphic novel is that its author's life experience may consist mainly in compulsive cartooning. But the trailblazer of this mode, Harvey Pekar, is not a cartoonist at all, barely a writer, and well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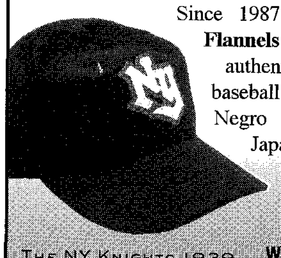
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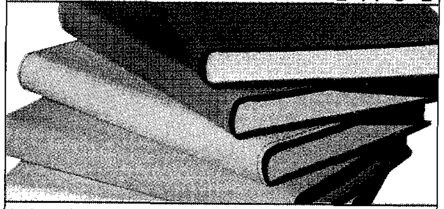
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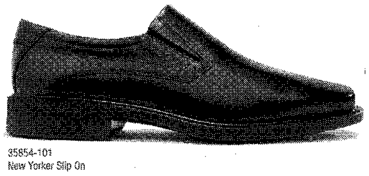

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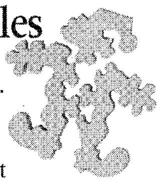

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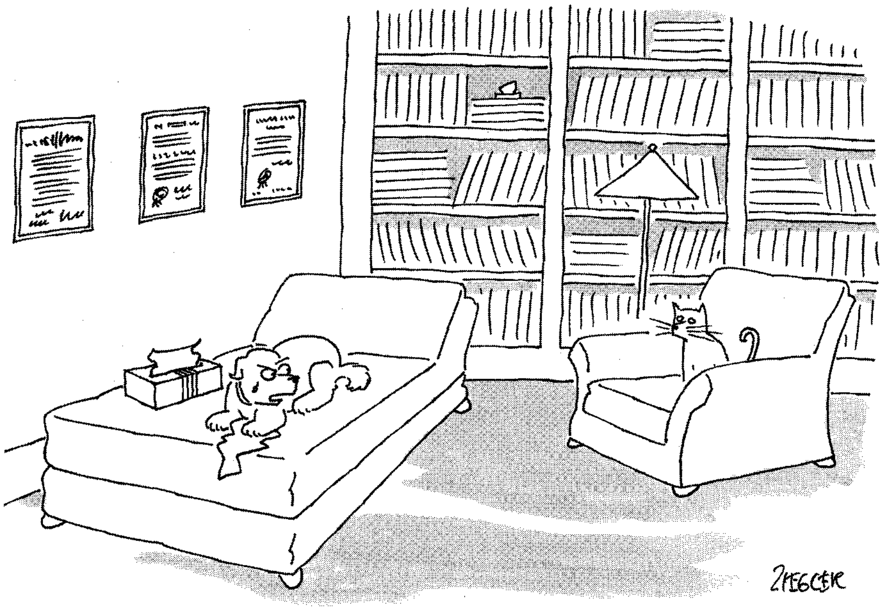
past adolescence, at least chronologically. Pekar, a lumpish Cleveland file clerk, came to public notice in several appearances on the David Letterman show, in the mid-nineteen-eighties, and was portrayed by Paul Giamatti in "American Splendor" (2003), a movie based on comics that Pekar wrote and others drew. A jazz and comics buff blessed with a connoisseur's taste and remarkable powers of persuasion, Pekar met Crumb in Cleveland in the sixties and enlisted him to illustrate long, grumpy monologues that told the story of his shambling existence. (Desultory personal content in a bravura visual form quickly became fashionable among younger artists, most of it quite bad.) Pekar has since dragooned several other cartoonists to his exquisitely tedious ends. The latest is Dean Haspiel, who performs with virtuoso flair in "The Quitter" (2005, DC Comics/Vertigo), relaying Pekar's confessions as a working-class dude who grew up with little in his favor except a knack for beating up other dudes. Pekar reviews the futilities of his life with humorless fixation and zero insight. He is the accidental minimalist of the graphic novel.

The best first-person graphic novel to date, "Persepolis" (2003), and the second-best, "Persepolis 2" (2004, both Pantheon), are by a woman, Marjane Satrapi. They suggest a number of rules for the form: have a compelling life, remember everything, tell it straight, and be very brave. "Persepolis" is about Satrapi's childhood in Tehran during the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and the Iran-Iraq War. "Persepolis 2" follows her to school in Vienna, then back to Iran, and again to Europe, perhaps for good. Her parents are upper-middle-class Marxists, whose extensive family and social connections and political involvement exposed her to the full tumult of the times. Her uncanny way of incorporating exposition, with nary a stumble in her pell-mell narrative momentum, immerses us in the lore of Iranian history and culture. Drawn in an inky and crude visual style that is as direct as a slap, the books track her imaginings and her passions, which are wonderfully responsive, though usually inadequate to the realities of the situation. It's a comic strategy that maintains buoyancy even in the face of the oppression, torture, and death of people dear to her, without for a moment treating the ordeals of others as secondary to her own. Satrapi's unforced empathy contrasts with the self-pitying tendencies that are common to first-person comics written by men. Her stubborn ingenuousness may cloy (she has said, "Instead of putting all this money to create arms, I think countries should invest in scholarships for kids to study abroad"), but we don't go to graphic novels for political philosophy.

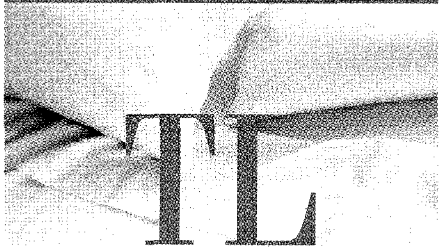
At least one artist, however, raises hopes for the graphic novel as a vehicle of political journalism. The Maltese-born Seattle resident Joe Sacco's much lauded "Safe Area Gorazde: The War in Eastern Bosnia, 1992-95" (2000) and "Palestine" (2001, both Fantagraphics) are personalized explorations of those terrible imbroglios, packed with illuminating information and peopled with hurting, raging, sometimes hilarious denizens. The raucous, tumbling visuals commandeer the reader's attention; we're along for the ride, and we hang on tight. But Sacco's success in combining the nerve and the savvy of war correspondence with the infectious rhetoric of comics may be not only inimitable but sui generis. In the new "Pyongyang: A Journey in North Korea," by Guy Delisle (2005, Drawn & Quarterly), the French-Canadian cartoonist describes, in a twee drawing style without a whisper of emotional force, a recent two-month stint during which he supervised animators of children's cartoons in the world's most disheartening capital city. Confined to an office and a nearly deserted hotel, and shadowed by taciturn guides and interpreters, Delisle adds only topical highlights to what might otherwise serve as a standard account of an unusually boring work assignment anywhere. Steve Mumford's "Baghdad Journal: An Artist in Occupied Iraq" (2005, Drawn & Quarterly) disappoints in another way: it offers realist watercolors that are accomplished but no more expressive than photographs, and the writing that accompanies them is pedestrian and prolix. If it weren't for Sacco, the lately alluring idea of fully engaged and engaging illustrated reportage would be a chimera.

Will Eisner's "A Contract with God," a book of stories finished in 1978, is regularly termed "the first graphic novel," at the instigation of the author himself, who died this year at the age of eighty-seven. Eisner created a masked-crime-fighter comic book, "The Spirit," in his youth; he was not a modest man, but legions of admirers forgave him that, as they forgive his work's cornball histrionics. Rooted in German Expressionism but more reminiscent of *MAD*-type burlesque than of George Grosz, his characters rub their hands, tear their hair, and, if they happen to fancy something, slaver. Next month, "A Contract with God" will be reissued with two other collections—"A Life Force" and "Dropsie Avenue"—as "The Contract with God Trilogy" (Norton). All the tales, which take place on a single block of the fictional Dropsie Avenue, in the Bronx, concern mostly Jewish characters and are set largely in the Depression era. The title story tells of a Russian immigrant, Frimme Hersh, who promises God a life of service in return for his favor. He is a beloved member of his synagogue community until the death of his adopted daughter embitters him, whereupon he curses God and becomes a rapacious real-estate tycoon. Heartsick in old age, he asks the rabbis to write a new contract, committing him to philanthropy. That night, Hersh dies, and lightning immediately strikes Dropsie Avenue—never leaving well enough alone is apparently a principle for Eisner. Over-the-topness is endemic to the comics, of course—an industry standard for popular action and horror titles, as well as for manga, and the default setting for Crumb's work. But it is ill suited to serious subjects, especially those that incorporate authentic social history.

Comics used to inhabit a world separate from that of grownup cartooning (a specialty of this magazine), which exploits the clownish and melodramatic proclivities of comics in reverse, and with studied understatement Daniel Clowes closes the gap. To winkle out meaning from indirect or muted expression flatters and delights our intelligence; it is a cynosure of urbanity. Clowes extends it to realms of middle-class comedy, set in small cities, with admixtures of the surreal and the gaudily neurotic—"Peanuts" with grievous tics. His "Ghost World" (1998, Fantagraphics)—transposed to the screen by Terry Zwigoff, in 2001, with flat compositions and an all but affectless acting style faithful to the original—is about the coming of age of two high-school girlfriends, in glum and often sinister circumstances, and involves a good deal of snappy patter, considerable cruelty, and an ultimate betrayal that would make you feel like a sucker if you hadn't observed the author's abundant warnings not to identify too poignantly with the heroines. Clowes plays crisp, bland cartooning, at times reminiscent of the old "Can You Draw This?" matchbook ads, against stealthily nuanced writing; reading him, it's as



"You haven't a clue what I'm talking about, do you?"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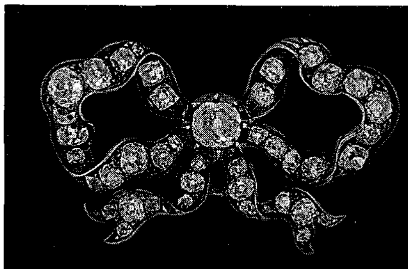
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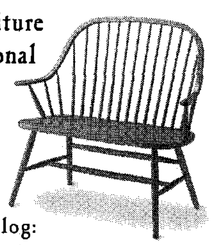
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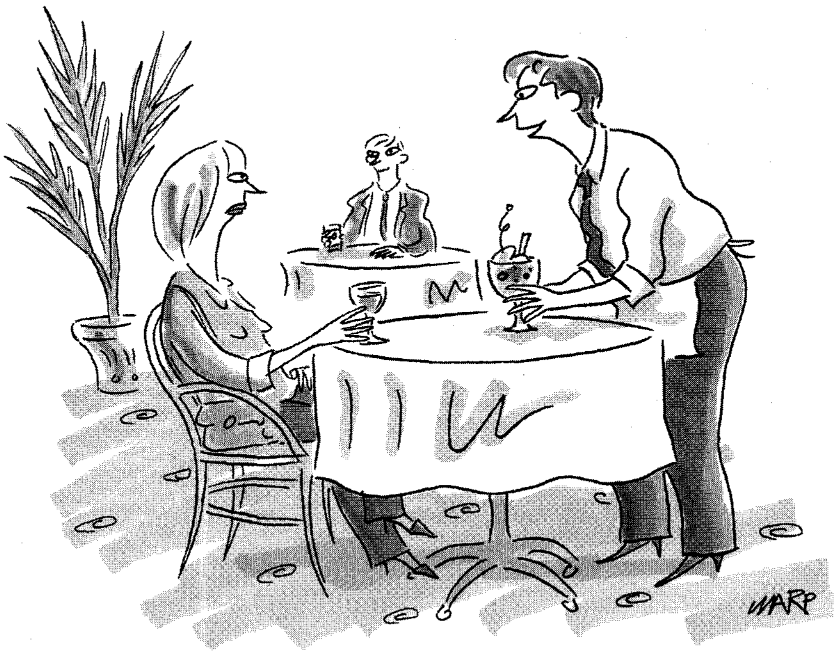

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if someone or something, nonchalant and a trifle bored, had invaded the control room of my thoughts and feelings, and were flipping switches. The short but replete "Ice Haven" (2005, Pantheon), a pageant of twisty characters and subplots, tells of what seems to be a murder along the lines of Leopold and Loeb but isn't, although there's plenty of psychological collateral damage to all.

One character, a "comic book critic," ruminates over his breakfast cereal, "While prose tends toward pure 'interiority,' coming to life in the reader's mind, and cinema gravitates toward the 'exteriority' of experiential spectacle, perhaps 'comics,' in its embrace of both the interiority of the written word and the physicality of image, more closely replicates the true nature of human consciousness . . ." Well put, though it's rubbish. (Clowes's critic is a figure of fun.) If the true nature of human consciousness were replicable, the art form that succeeded in doing it would crowd out all others. The true nature of human consciousness—in the time that can be spared from the quest for food, sex, and whatnot—is to enjoy itself by every means possible, an aim enhanced by aesthetic inventions from the "Ring" cycle to Cracker Jack prizes.

A certain theoretical frenzy about comics today is understandable, as it has been in other art forms in periods of their rapid development—think of the debates about painting that roiled Renaissance Italy. But such intellectual arousal rarely precedes creative glory. On the contrary, it commonly indicates that an artistic breakthrough, having been made and recognized, is over, and that a process of increasingly strained emulation and diminishing returns has set in. Nearly all art movements are launched by work that, when the dust clears, turns out to have been their definitive, peak contribution. "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" looms over the busy ramifications of Cubism as "The Waste Land" looms over the modern poetry that it inspired. Accordingly, there may never be another graphic novel as good as "Jimmy Corrigan," even by Ware himself—whose current serial in the *Times Magazine*, though tangy, bespeaks a style on cruise control. But if the major discoveries of the graphic novel's new world of the imagination have already been accomplished, its colonizing of the territory, like its threat to foot traffic in bookstore aisles, has only just begun. ♦

THE NEW YORKER, NOV. 12, 1927

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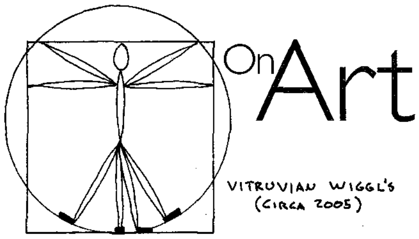

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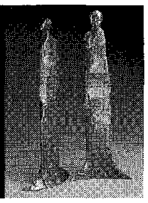

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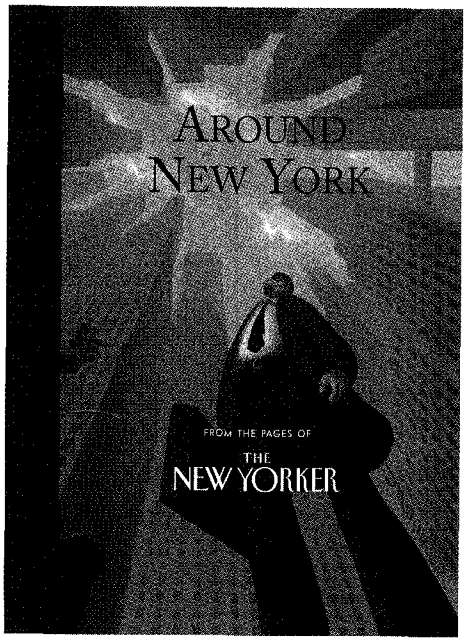

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BOOKS

DECEPTIVELY CONCEPTUAL

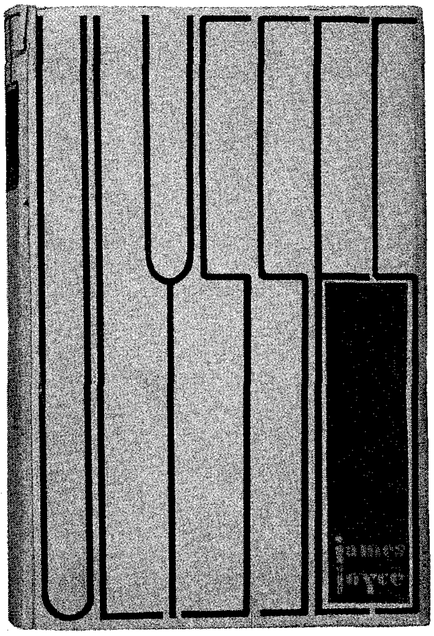
Books and their covers.

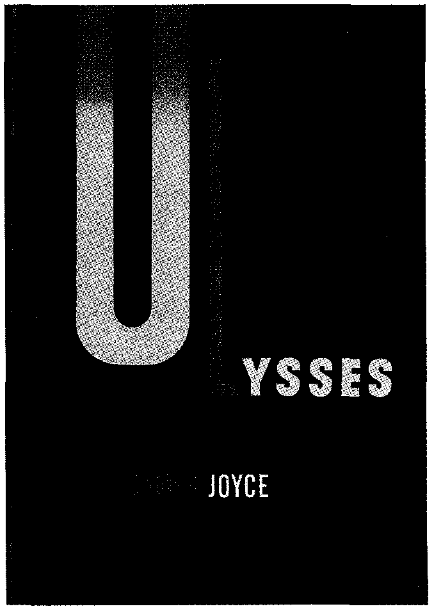
BY JOHN UPDIKE

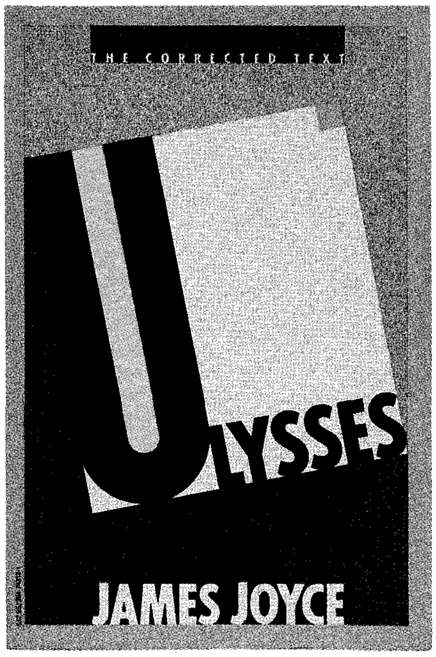
Book covers and jackets might seem to hover beneath serious critical notice, but nothing human is alien to the academic discipline called "cultural studies," be it baseball cards or vampire movies or female footgear. All such devices open inward into the secrets of Everyman's psyche and of capitalism's perfidious designs upon Everyman's pocketbook. The first line of mass-market paperbacks in this country, in fact, was called Pocket Books, produced in 1939, soon after the success, in England, of Penguin Books. The English-speaking countries were slower than those on the Continent to eliminate the huge fraction—around forty per cent—of book-production costs invested in the many-layered hard cover itself. The year 1929 had seen, in the United States, the birth of Charles Boni Paper Books, but these were marketed by subscription to the Rockwell Kent-fancying carriage trade and did not long outlast the stock-market boom. I remember as a boy the dramatic arrival, in the town variety store, of a rack of Pocket Books, mostly mysteries, whose discreetly lurid covers were covered by a thin sheet of cellophane that tended to curl at the corners and could be peeled entirely off by persistent little fingers. They cost a quarter, compared with a dime for a comic book, and had much more text, as well as sexier covers. The two such covers reproduced in "By Its Cover: Modern American Book Cover Design," by Ned Drew and Paul Sternberger (Princeton Architectural Press; $29.95), date from 1956 and 1948. "The Case of the Fiery Fingers," a Perry Mason mystery, by Erle Stanley Gardner, shows a leggy lady in a very see-through nightie; the Columbia professor John Erskine's wry "The Private Life of Helen of Troy" is fronted, under the Popular Library imprint, by Helen in a clinging chiton and the rather bald headline "HER LUST CAUSED THE TROJAN WAR."

From such two-bit cheesecake it was, we learn in "By Its Cover," an elevating leap into the postwar, upscale modernist designs of New Directions hardcovers and the new quality-paperback lines. Drew and Sternberger, Newark-based professors of graphic design and art history, respectively, lump dust jackets with paperback covers and trace their intertwined development in terms of modernism and postmodernism. Modernism in book form is exemplified by Joyce's "Ulysses," and "By Its Cover" begins with Ernst Reichl's striking but almost illegible jacket for the first American edition of that work, in 1934; the title's seven letters, in elongated and squared-off form, take up the entire front surface of the book, echoing the mazelike course the characters pursue through a June day in Dublin. For the 1949 Random House edition, E. McKnight Kauffer's jacket keeps large letters as the only decorative element but in a more playful and easily deciphered manner. We are told that the 1986 version, by Carin Goldberg, "once again incorporated the language of modernism, but now as a self-conscious act of historical quotation." Goldberg's colorful simplification of Reichl's august maze is bold and festive compared with the Modern Library's placid 1940 jacket by an unknown designer, though the exaggerated "U" remains, this time in a hand-lettered script. The newest Random House edition, of 2002, restores the 1934 original, as itself a classic—a respectfully preserved artifact from the storied age of modernism.

"Modernism," like "pornography" and "literary fiction," is a term hard to define, though we all feel we know what it means—Apollinaire and Gertrude Stein, Bauhaus workers' housing, the enigmatic and erudite complexity of "Ulysses" and "The Waste Land," the startling distortions of Picasso's "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon." Book covers, however, with their ineluctable role as advertisements for the contents of the book, can scarcely attain the proud *non serviam* of high mod-







FROM "BY ITS COVER: MODERN AMERICAN BOOK COVER DESIGN"/COURTESY PRINCETON ARCHITECTURAL PRESS ernism: art for its own willful, bourgeois-baiting sake. Alvin Lustig's abstract patterns for New Directions editions of Kafka, Henry Miller, and Djuna Barnes in the forties do not seem much more modernist than Arthur Hawkins's sans-serif, Art Deco-ish designs for Shaw and W. Olaf Stapledon in the thirties, though there is a certain intransigent aloofness in the modest size of Lustig's title typefaces. At the same time that he was presenting Henry James novels in an ultra-cool linear design laid over brown and gray rectangles, Lustig was perpetrating, for Lorca and Italo Svevo, crowded collages that anticipated postmodernism's eclectic clutter. In different covers he echoes the high art of Miró, Arp, and Clyfford Still. Designing primarily for James Laughlin's idealistic New Directions, Lustig was freer from the crasser commercial pressures, but his pronouncements, as teacher and design guru, on the book designer's social mission seem precariously lofty. "By Its Cover" claims, "For him, like his European predecessors, modernism reflected larger social goals of integrating art and life, blurring the boundaries that had separated high art and utilitarian object." Lustig, before his early death, in 1955, put it more grandly yet:

> If I seem to place a heavy mantle of responsibility on the shoulders of those who are really only expected to make nice shapes and colors, it is because history demands it. Every act that allows productive facilities to serve only itself, contributes inevitably to the threat of destruction that already looms on the horizon.

So, far from *non serviam*, book design serves unnamed masters whose selflessness forestalls atomic war. Lustig's contemporary Paul Rand took a more playful approach to the craft, as shown in the curly, spindly handwriting in which he often lettered his covers. His artistic signature was distinctly whimsical, though he is, according to Drew and Sternberger, "best remembered for his corporate trademarks." His earlier book covers are his most radical, as illustrated by the jumpy doubled letters of "DADA" for "The Dada Painters and Poets" (1951) and by the torn theatre ticket, on a black ground, that wrapped the reviewer Harold Clurman's "The Fervent Years" (1950). Unillustrated but cited are "his 1938-45 covers for *Direction*, a small anti-fascist magazine of art and culture whose modest budget and political stance lent themselves to bold simplified forms in limited colors." Pro-Fascist magazines (how many were there in the U.S.?) presumably had bigger budgets. The authors' insistent politicization of design aesthetics has a musty and wordy Marxist tone:

> Perhaps this tension between the demands of commerce and the possibility for conceptual depth made modernism attractive to so many American designers: it offered an interweaving of rigorous formal aesthetics and potential for creative expression with an ultimate goal of social and economic utility.

Economic utility to whom? To book manufacturers, basically. Publishing forms a minor branch of the entertainment industry, and book design is increasingly a matter of fashion—that is, of attention-getting. In the visual clamor of a bookstore, the important thing is to be different; a whisper becomes a shout, and the ugly becomes beautiful if it attracts attention. Yet an utter flaunting of conventional expectations may baffle and repel the public; when the title and the author's name are left off the front of the book, as in three examples taken from the past few years, it sends a subliminal message of contempt for the written word, the product being packaged.

The postwar book designer has two audiences—other designers, who applaud daring, witty "creative expression," and the bookstore browser, whose supposed interests are ever more zealously safeguarded in "a corporate environment where marketing analysts, editorial boards, and authors insist on significant participation in the design process." In this board of overseers, authors have the disadvantage of an intimate and proprietorial acquaintance with the text, while the marketing analysts have only a record of previous flops and successes to go by, and no way of producing that impression of something new which is one ingredient of a commercial success in the creative arts. In the end, nobody buys a book jacket, though sometimes a jacket—like Robert Scudellari's inviting, bright-red wrapper for the very successful "Stories of John Cheever" (1978), with its huge silver "C"—does cheer on searchers for a Christmas present to bestow.

Paul Bacon, described by Drew and

Three covers for "Ulysses": Ernst Reichl, 1934; E. McKnight Kauffer, 1949; Carin Goldberg, 1986.

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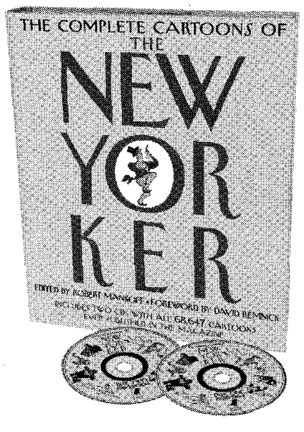

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Sternberger as "one of the most remarkable designers to adapt to the needs of the corporate publishing world of the 1970s," had talent, they admit, but only when "blended with a humble attitude" did it enable him to make the leap from jazz magazines and record sleeves to best-selling novels. Bacon's jackets for "Compulsion" (1956) and "Catch-22" (1961) are humble indeed, combining clear type, generous areas of blank color, and very small and not especially indicative figures that leave the book's contents up to the peruser's imagination. The designs do not get between the customer and the book, whereas his jackets for "The Most of S. J. Perelman" (1958) and "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" (1962) do—at least, they breed expectations of the antic and the psychedelic, respectively, that might be disappointed. Bacon's jackets for the historical novels "Confessions of Nat Turner" (1967) and "Ragtime" (1975) play with type that gives a less obtrusive foretaste of the text. About half, I would say, of the covers and jacket fronts reproduced in "By Its Cover" try too hard—they come forward, as it were, preëmptively, including two that mimic, with disconcerting accuracy, cigar boxes. A good cover should be a bit recessive in its art, leading us past the cover into the book itself. In the postwar battle (as "By Its Cover" sees it) between modernism and Mammon, seduction is a more successful tactic than aggression.

We look to books not only for stimulation but for reassurance. There is no mention in "By Its Cover" of Edward Gorey and the quiet, hand-lettered, cross-hatchy covers he executed in the fifties for Doubleday Anchor books, but they spoke reassuringly, in the fledgling days of the paperback revolution, of dependability. A wealth of previously hard-to-find treasures, from Melville's "Redburn" and Gogol's tales to Kierkegaard's "Fear and Trembling" and Stendhal's long essay on love, were poured into the same staid yet impish mold, the Gorey style of cover. Milton Glaser, the most distinctive and prolific artist at Push Pin Studios, did something of the same in the sixties for a number of Vintage titles and the Signet editions of Shakespeare's plays. People like sets of things, as signs of ultimate order. Though the heyday of the uniform bound edition passed with the Edwardians, modern bibliophiles can take pleasure in paperbacks whose consistent appearance implies a congenially shared sensibility. The slightly larger and unabashedly "progressive" (one of Drew and Sternberger's favorite accolades) format of Grove Press's Evergreen imprint offered a spread of warmed-over, sometimes spicy titles as aspects of one big feast of outré classics. Readers in those early postwar decades had a sudden, bountiful alternative to the bulky fare found on the hardcover best-seller list, and the relatively adventurous covers were part of an intellectual romance.

As construed by "By Its Cover," the next three decades of design, the final three of the century, were characterized by the advent, triumph, and refinement of postmodern eclecticism, whose hallmark is "not only an awareness and understanding of the past, but a willingness to quote from it unapologetically." Modernism, in its Bauhausian, utopian aspirations, looked to the future; postmodernism to the past. Instead of streamlining and "Less is more," we get knobby, collaged "appropriation" of preëxisting images, either photographic or culled from the world's vast archives of type fonts and prephotographic engravings. Put bluntly, the designers of covers and jackets all but ceased to draw; pen and brush yielded to the ever more capable computer as the graphics tool of choice. Rather than generate images, designers manipulate them. Of the illustrated examples in "By Its Cover" of dazzlingly inventive recent work by Carol Devine Carson, Chip Kidd, and John Gall—all part of the in-house design team at Alfred A. Knopf—few bear any trace of the designer's hand. One exception, piquantly, is Chip Kidd's own novel, "The Cheese Monkeys," for which Kidd provided an "unfinished comp," an inked-in cover sketch with visible pencilled guidelines; it provides an ironic tribute, perhaps, to the lost tradition of hand-lettered jackets, elegantly upheld by English publishers and, until the irresistible onslaught of computer fonts, by American designers like Neil Fujita. In a discussion of some third-millennium jackets entirely devoid (except, presumably, on the spine) of lettering, "By Its Cover" speaks of a "sort of broader engagement in which the designers consider their viewers to be participants in the construction of meaning," and of the design "not as an isolated creative act, but as an activity of integrating object, means of reproduction, and audience."

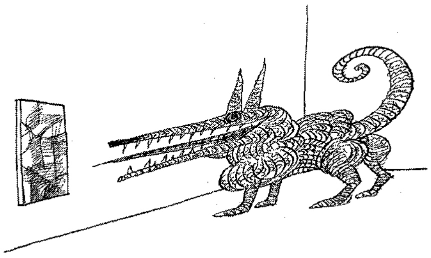
Well, when hasn't it been ever such? A book is an object, a work of manufacture whose many elements, from type and binding to quality of paper, are susceptible to aesthetic criticism (has print, for example, ever been as sharp and clear as it was in the vanished days of letter-press?) but whose meaning has always had to be constructed, as a writer and a reader collaborate in imagining a series of scenes and events. Any artistic creation collaborates with the viewer, reader, or listener, and the present-day designer of books appeals to a sensibility very differently stocked—digitally stocked, as it were—from that of the young book-fancier of fifty years ago. To me as a consumer, the computer-generated jackets and covers have a certain hard-edged coldness and clutter; to me as a book producer, the digital-graphics revolution has the virtue of removing a contemporary illustrator from the equation. Appropriating a Blake watercolor, say, or a Dürer etching or an Ingres painting for the cover's pictorial element puts the text in excellent company without diluting its descriptive authority. Nobody confuses these artists' representations with the author's, but their validated excellence may rub off. There is also a convenience of speed; I once watched over a designer's shoulder while she cropped and enlarged an appropriated painting until it perfectly balanced and fit with the lettering. It was like arriving at "Bingo!" Bingo is still the goal, though the path to it now snakes through a maze of technology and warehoused historical styles and images.

One designer is described as having "combed French and Italian flea markets for ephemera with inspirational typefaces"; a flea-market, rummage-sale sort of aesthetic, traceable to Pop art and especially to Robert Rauschenberg, can be, in the words of the design critic Steven Heller, "deceptively conceptual, giving the impression that a statement exists, when in reality the pseudo-poetic imagery camouflages the fact of a nonexistent point of view." Drew and Sternberger quickly propose that "a 'nonexistent point of view' might have significance in and of itself." Zero is also a number. You can, possibly, tell a book by its cover, but the cover isn't the contents. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun, by Gita May (Yale; $30). Vigée Le Brun became a famous portraitist while still in her twenties, and was a favorite of Marie-Antoinette. May's biography seeks to rescue her from critics who have dismissed her as an operator and a superficial talent. Born in 1755, Vigée Le Brun lived until the eighteen-forties and produced two volumes of memoirs, which form the backbone of this account. Occasionally, one feels the lack of broader perspectives, and May, a literature professor, fails to give a detailed sense of either the historical context or the aesthetic content of her subject's works. Still, she effectively conveys that, for Vigée Le Brun, matters such as politics, friendship, and love were subordinate to an absolute focus on honing her skill. Even post-Revolution exile was turned to advantage; she traversed Europe looking at masterpieces and painting such subjects as Byron and the family of Catherine the Great.

Eero Saarinen, by Jayne Merkel (Phaidon; $75). In 1956, when Saarinen made the cover of *Time*, he was America's most renowned architect. His sculptural modernism—evident in such commissions as the T.W.A. terminal at Kennedy Airport, the CBS building, and the St. Louis Arch—was in perfect accord with the country's postwar mood. He trained at the school founded by his father, the celebrated Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen, and established important relationships there with his future collaborators Charles and Ray Eames. An indefatigable worker, he oversaw more than forty staff architects at the height of his practice, and created in detail hundreds of possible designs for each project. After his death, in 1961, his work fell into critical neglect. Merkel's handsome volume presents the first truly comprehensive survey, and seeks to demonstrate how Saarinen could be "mainstream and avant-garde at the same time."



Captured: A Film/Video History of the Lower East Side, edited by Clayton Patterson (Seven Stories; $24). Lower East Side film took off using the combat cameras developed during the Second World War, flourished along with the Beats and the New Wave, and culminated in the eighties art scene. The genre has its own pantheon, including the director Jack Smith, the film-supplier Rafic Azzouni, and the actors Rockets Redglare and Taylor Mead, Warhol's muse. Patterson has assembled an occasionally bewildering collection of essays by, and interviews with, artists who were there. Recurrent themes include slumlords, drugs, and improvisation: Smith "almost always had a script . . . but it just dissolved." Patterson has his own place in this history as the videographer of the Tompkins Square police riots, and at times one feels he has an axe to grind. One poignant moment is a plea to readers to help the aging Mead fight eviction.

Fresh Fruits, by Shoichi Aoki (Phaidon; $29.95). In 1997, Aoki, a Japanese photographer who specialized in capturing street fashion in Paris, London, and New York, turned his eye to Tokyo's Harajuku district. There young people swarmed the streets in a playful riot of candy-colored, eye-catching ensembles, creatively blending hand-modified designer-label items with T-shirts and thrift-shop finds. *Fruits*, the magazine Aoki founded to feature his Harajuku photographs, went on to acquire an international following. A previous volume of *Fruits* pictures appeared in 2001, and in this follow-up the eclecticism seems inexhaustible. The portrait subjects, asked to explain their outfits, are drolly laconic ("boring feeling," "like Snow White"). And though recognizable types—punks, hip-hop kids, jocks—regularly appear, the over-all effect is less that of a tribal identity than of a super-cute costume party.

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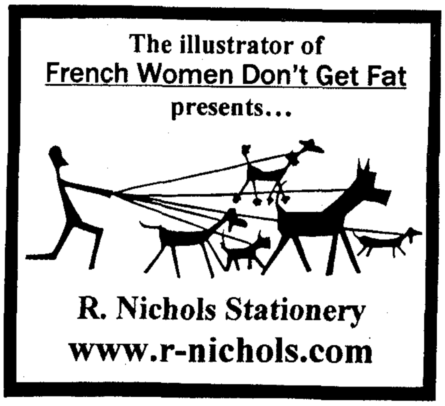
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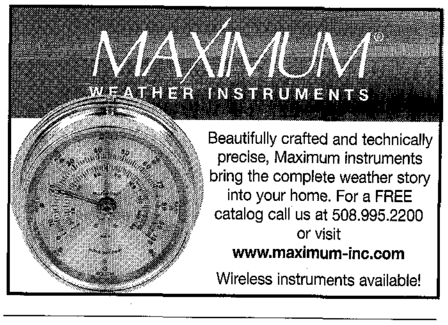
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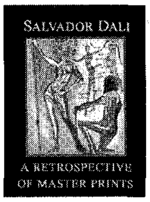

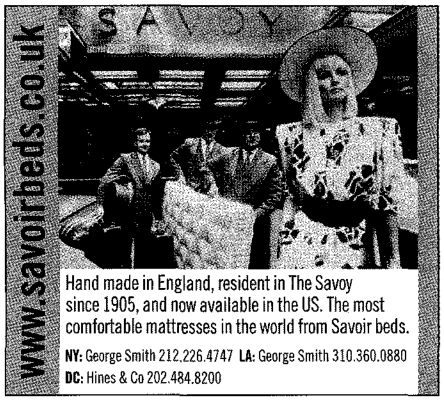

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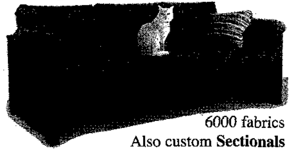

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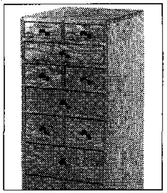

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A CRITIC AT LARGE

UNPOPULAR FRONT

American art and the Cold War.

BY LOUIS MENAND

Was Jackson Pollock a weapon in the Cold War? There is a lot of barbed wire surrounding that question. The Cold War had battlegrounds all over the world, and it was a hot enough war in some of them, but in the main battleground, Western Europe, it was a war for hearts and minds—an idea war, an image war, a propaganda war. Global combat on these terms was the policy of the American government. There was no secret about the policy, and most of its enactments—such as the Fulbright Program, which was established in 1946—were carried out in broad daylight and to public acclaim. But some were carefully shrouded, made to appear the work of individuals and institutions acting on their own, without government sponsorship, as was the case with the magazine *Encounter*, which was published in London and contributed to by prominent American and European intellectuals, and which was revealed, in 1967, to be a creature of the C.I.A.

It seems a contradiction, even hypocritical, for the United States to have promoted the Western values of free elections, free speech, and free markets by covert methods. Democracy means accountability; that's what makes democratic governments different from authoritarian and totalitarian ones. But, until its cloak unravelled in the late nineteen-sixties, the C.I.A., and the people who were in on its activities, operated in secrecy. They kept the secret because they understood the logic. The target audience for cultural propaganda in the Cold War was foreign élites—in particular, left-wing intellectuals and avant-garde writers and artists who might still have some attachment, sincere, sentimental, or opportunistic, to Communism and the Soviet Union. The essence of the courtship was: it's possible to be left-wing, avant-garde, *and* anti-Communist. Look at these American artists and intellectuals, happily criticizing bourgeois capitalism and shocking mainstream tastes, all safely protected by the laws of a free society. In Russia, these people would be in the Lubyanka, or somewhere north of the Arctic Circle.

In practice, though, the American creed boils down to this: you have a right to say or create what you please, but the taxpayer doesn't have to pay for it. Highbrow criticizing and shocking are regarded by most Americans as toxic by-products of the culture of liberty: they show that we're serious about the First Amendment, but there is no reason to subsidize them. This was one of the lessons of the congressional attacks on the National Endowment for the Arts at the very end of the Cold War; but the lesson had been learned before, in a parallel episode, at the very start of the Cold War, an episode that defined the limits of what government could openly do in the practice of cultural diplomacy.

Taylor Littleton and Maltby Sykes's "Advancing American Art: Painting, Politics, and Cultural Confrontation at Mid-Century," recently published in a second edition (Alabama; $19.95), is an appropriately amused and acerbic account of the fiasco. In 1946, the State Department's newly formed Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs put together a show called "Advancing American Art." The division spent forty-nine thousand dollars of government money to purchase seventy-nine paintings by American artists. The exhibition was intended, as Littleton and Sykes put it, to be "one element in an international definition of American reassurance, stability, and enlightenment"—a friendly beacon in the grim aftermath of the war. It included works by Romare Bearden, Arthur Dove, John Marin, Ben Shahn, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Jacob Lawrence. Very few of the paintings were abstract, but most were identifiably modern: naturalist, expressionist, painterly. The State Department wanted the world to know that the United States was not just a nation of cars, chewing gum, and Hollywood movies. A preview of the exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum was well received. In *The Nation*, Clement Greenberg, already a leading arbiter of advanced painting, wrote that the show was "a remarkable accomplishment, and its moral should be taken to heart by those who control the public destiny of art in our country." The collection was split into two; thirty paintings were sent to Latin America, and the rest went to Paris and then to Prague. The exhibition was scheduled to continue to Hungary and Poland, but Czechoslovakia turned out to be the last stop.

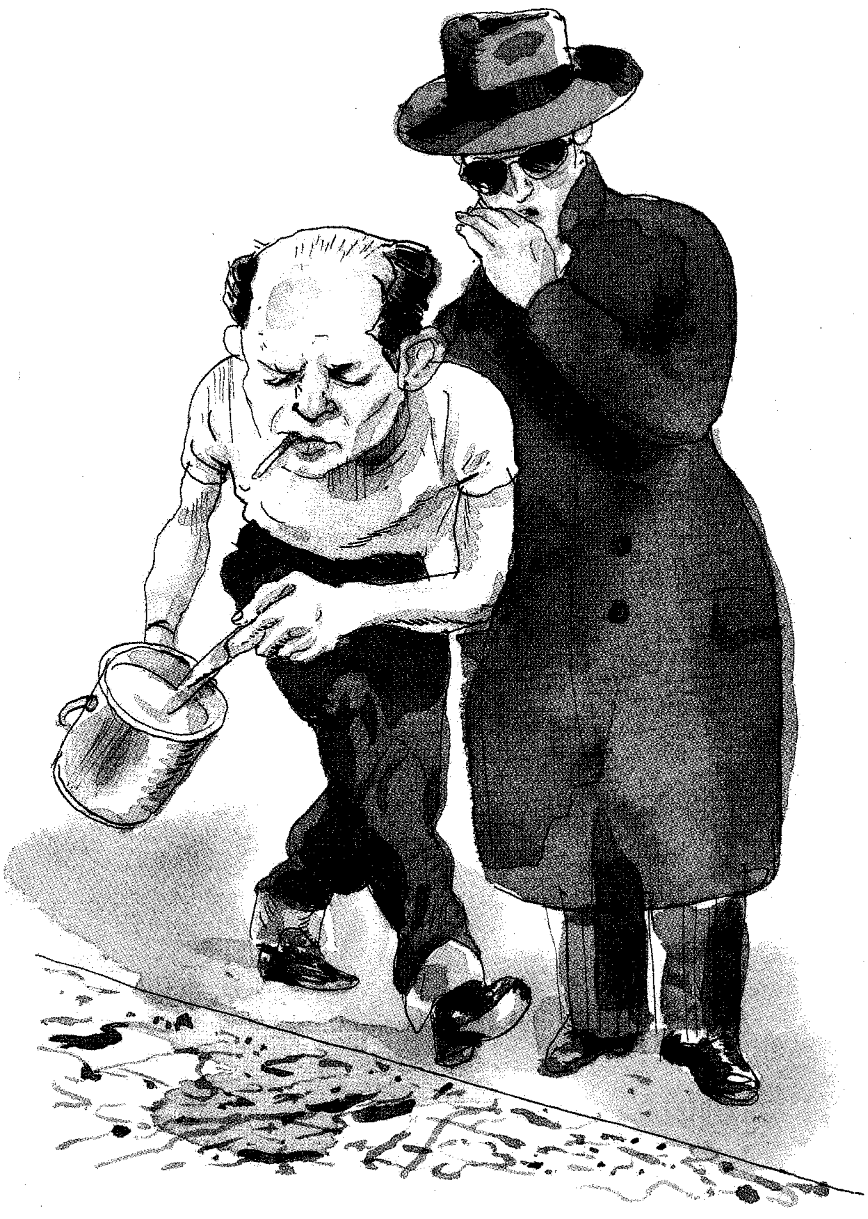
In spite of the reviews, the show had been attacked by the American Artists Professional League, an organization of conservative artists and illustrators, which wrote to the State Department to complain that the selection was unrepresentative, and that the paintings that had been chosen were "strongly marked with the radicalism of the new trends in European art" and were "not indigenous to our soil." By the time the show was overseas, the story had been picked up in the mainstream press. *Look* ran an article, with illustrations, under the headline "Your Money Bought These Paintings." The chairman of the House Appropriations Committee wrote an angry letter to the Secretary of State, George C. Marshall. "The paintings are a travesty upon art," he complained. "They were evidently gotten up by people whose object was apparently to, (1) To make the United States appear ridiculous in the eyes of foreign countries, and to (2) Establish ill-will towards the United States."

Another congressman demanded inquiries into the political backgrounds of the artists represented in the show. It turned out that the names of eighteen of the forty-seven artists appeared in the records of the House Un-American Activities Committee; three were reported to have been members of the Communist Party. As was his habit, President Truman spoke bluntly: he described the collection as "the vaporings of half-baked lazy people." Marshall ordered the show recalled, and the paintings were consigned to the War Assets Administration as war surplus and sold off. They brought in $5,544. An O'Keeffe sold for fifty dollars. Marshall announced that no taxpayer money would be spent on modern art again, and the State Department issued a directive that no artist suspected of being a Communist or fellow-traveller could be exhibited at government expense.

"Advancing American Art" was a boomerang, reconfirming the very prejudices about American philistinism that it was intended to demolish. It also helped to put a man named George Dondero into the history books. Dondero was a congressman from Michigan, and his tender appreciations of modern art are so often quoted that one almost suspects that he composed them with solely that aim in mind. It is hard to believe, for example, that his great 1949 speeches against "the black knights of the isms" were the work of a man incapable of irony:

> The artists of the "isms" change their designations as often and as readily as the Communist front organizations. Léger and Duchamp are now in the United States to aid in the destruction of our standards and traditions. The former has been a contributor to the Communist cause in America; the latter is now fancied by the neurotics as a surrealist.

> Cubism aims to destroy by designed disorder.
>
> Futurism aims to destroy by the machine myth. . . .
>
> Dadaism aims to destroy by ridicule.
>
> Expressionism aims to destroy by aping the primitive and insane. . . .



Were Jackson Pollock's paintings used as propaganda in the Cold War?

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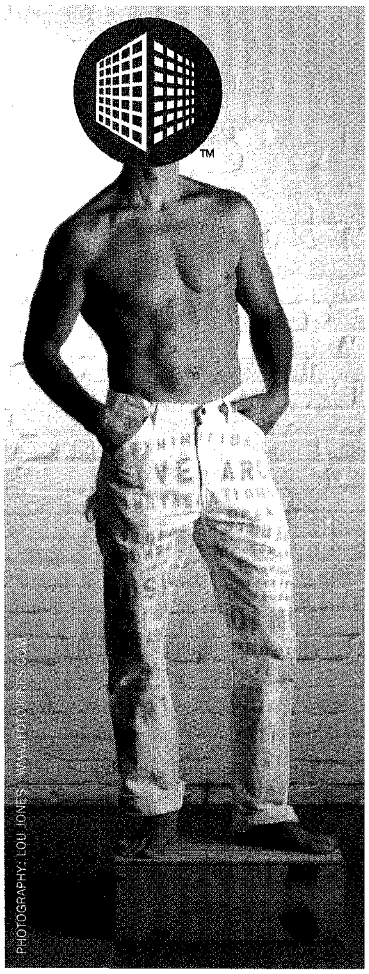

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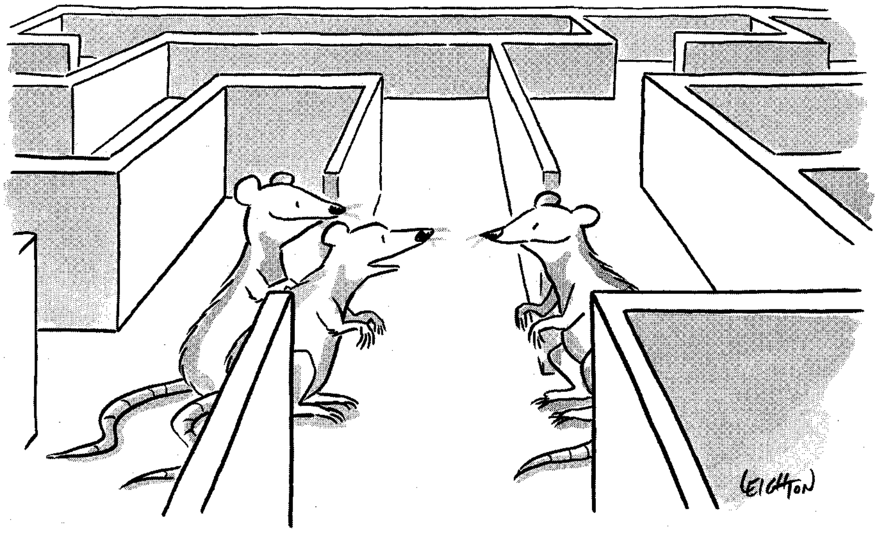

"We'll take it."

• •

Abstractionism aims to destroy by the creation of brainstorms.

Surrealism aims to destroy by the denial of reason.

The State Department plainly needed to find other ways to skin this diplomatic cat. Michael Krenn's "Fall-Out Shelters for the Human Spirit" (North Carolina; $39.95) is a history of government efforts to send American art abroad after 1946 without throwing raw meat to the demagogues. The problem with "Advancing American Art" was that it was entirely a government program: the State Department actually owned the work that it was exhibiting. The solution was to enlist the participation of institutions like museums, foundations, and arts groups, and to give the government's role a much lower profile. By these means, Krenn says, between 1945 and 1970 the State Department, the United States Information Agency, and the Smithsonian Institution managed to send hundreds of exhibitions of American art abroad, often to positive reviews and enthusiastic audiences.

As Krenn shows, it was not a straight road. It swerved as Cold War anxieties swerved, and the fortunes of the exhibitions had little to do with their content. You would not imagine that a show named "Sport in Art," sponsored in part by *Sports Illustrated*, would arouse the anti-Communists, but it did. When the exhibition previewed, in Dallas, in 1956, it was attacked by an outfit called the Dallas County Patriotic Council, whose chairman expressed distress that "our tax money is going into the pockets of artists devoted to the destruction of our way of life." He meant that the artists were Communists, and though the show went on in Dallas, an international tour was cancelled by the U.S.I.A., nominally because of "budgetary considerations." A major exhibition, "American Painting, 1900-1950," was cancelled soon afterward for the same reason: charges that some of the artists were Communists or fellow-travellers.

The official line, of course, was that art in the United States was beyond politics. Eisenhower had more patience than Truman did with modernism; he thought of cultural diplomacy as a branch of psychological warfare, and his Administration was the first to provide systematic funding for international arts exhibitions. "As long as our artists are free to create with sincerity and conviction, there will be healthy controversy and progress in art," Eisenhower said in 1954, for the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Museum of Modern Art. "How different it is in tyranny. When artists are made the slaves and tools of the state; when artists become the chief propagandists of a cause, progress is arrested and creation and genius are destroyed." His Administration helped sponsor tours of American art, opera ("Porgy and Bess," meant to counter Soviet propaganda about American racism), musical theatre, dance, and jazz.

Still, the promotion abroad of American art and letters after 1946 required a delicate form of intrigue between private institutions and government agencies. The more radical or modernist the art and letters, the more covert the government's participation needed to be. The State Department and the U.S.I.A. could send "Oklahoma!" around the world (and did), but they could not very comfortably arrange emergency funding to keep *Partisan Review* afloat, as the C.I.A. seems to have done in 1953, or promote a style of avant-garde painting offensive to congressional tastes. The revelation about *Encounter* was part of a general exposure of the considerable extent to which the C.I.A., by means of dummy foundations and front organizations such as the Congress for Cultural Freedom, headquartered in Berlin, had subsidized and promoted activities that it calculated to be anti-Soviet. The fall-out was unpleasant. Many of the writers and editors associated with *Encounter* claimed that they had had no idea about the man behind the curtain; these people looked like dupes. Others claimed that "everyone knew"; these looked like the people Julien Benda warned about in "The Treason of the Intellectuals." A shadow of suspicion fell over everything that might have elicited the interest and assistance of the C.I.A., and one of those things was Abstract Expressionism.

What would have been the geopolitical uses of abstraction? The theory, as it was proposed in articles published in *Artforum* and other journals in the nineteen-seventies, and then elaborated in Serge Guilbaut's "How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art" (1983) and Frances Stonor Saunders's "The Cultural Cold War" (1999), is that abstract painting was an ideal propaganda tool. It was avant-garde, the product of an advanced civilization. In contrast to Soviet painting, it was neither representational nor didactic. It could be understood as pure painting—art absorbed by its own possibilities, experiments in color and form. Or it could be understood as pure expression—a "school" in which every artist had a unique signature. A Pollock looked nothing like a Rothko, which looked nothing like a Gorky or a Kline. Either way, Abstract Expressionism stood for autonomy: the autonomy of art, freed from its obligation to represent the world, or the freedom of the individual—just the principles that the United States was defending in the worldwide struggle. Art critics therefore developed apolitical modes of appreciation and evaluation, emphasizing the formal rigor or the existentialist drama of the paintings; and the Museum of Modern Art favored Abstract Expressionists in its purchases and international exhibitions, at the expense of art whose politics might have been problematic—the kind of naturalist art, for example, that was featured in the "Advancing American Art" exhibition. But the C.I.A. lurked in the shadows. It turned out that a Pollock had a politics.

This was a revisionist interpretation of art history, and it had two prongs. The first was the suggestion of actual collusion between MOMA and the C.I.A. The evidence for this has always been largely circumstantial. The man who directed cultural activities at the C.I.A. in the early years of the Cold War, Thomas Braden, had previously been the executive secretary of MOMA. According to Saunders, a number of MOMA trustees were also on the board of the Farfield Foundation, a C.I.A. front. The president of the museum in the nineteen-forties and fifties was Nelson Rockefeller, whose family had supported MOMA from the beginning, and who had close ties to the intelligence community and an unabashed commitment to the patriotic uses of art. (It was Nelson who had demanded the removal of Diego Rivera's murals from the walls of Rockefeller Center, because they depicted Lenin.) During the war, Rockefeller had been the Roosevelt Administration's coördinator of inter-American affairs; the head of the art section in that office, René d'Harnoncourt, joined MOMA in 1944 and became its director.

What this suggests, though, is simply that the leaders of MOMA, like the leaders of most mainstream institutions in the United States after the war, were anti-Communists. As Saunders acknowledges, there were no explicit arrangements between the government and the museum, and the reason was that there didn't need to be. Everybody

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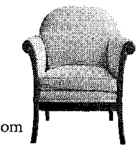

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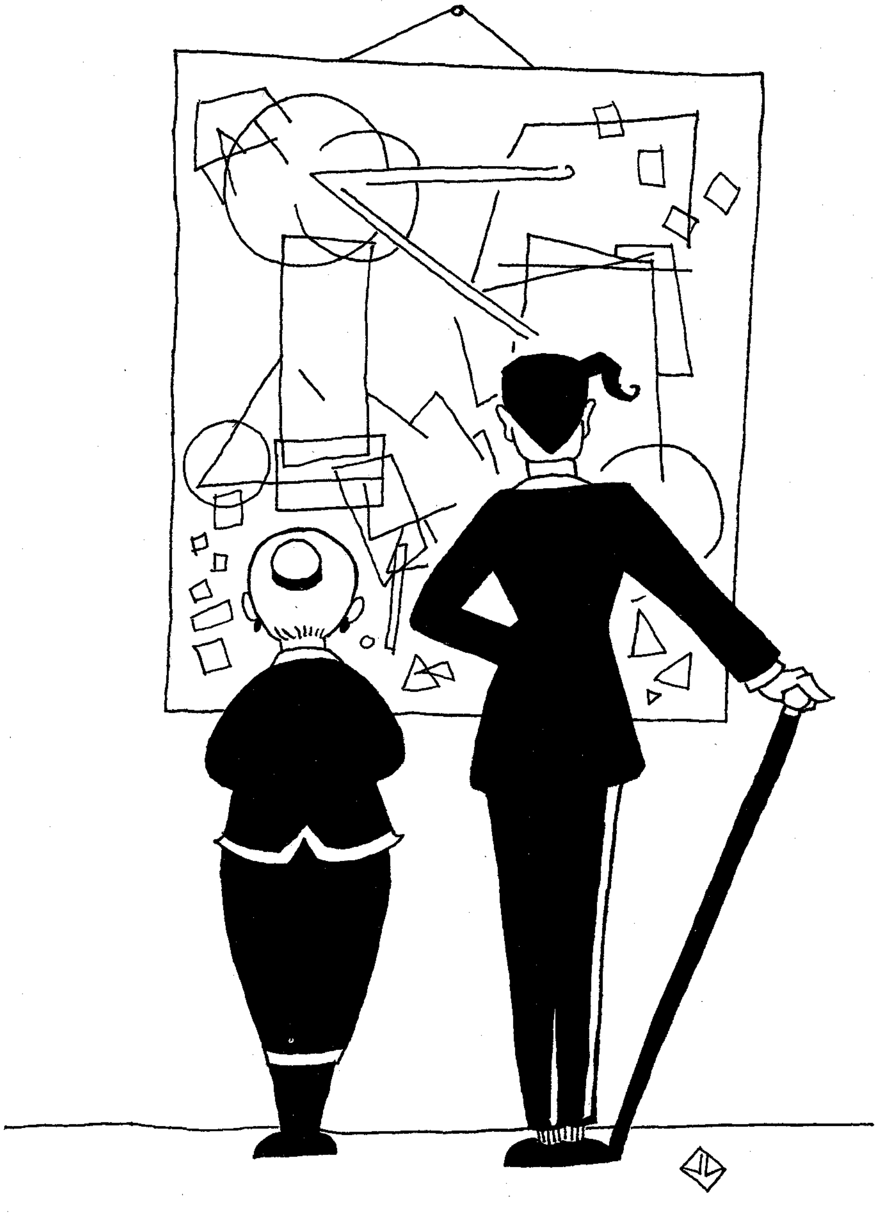
was on the same page. Rockefeller and Alfred Barr, the founding director of MOMA, who, after the war, served as chairman of the painting and sculpture collections, did not have to be encouraged to use American art to promote the nation's image abroad. They never pretended that they were up to anything else. Barr was a lover of European modernism, but he was on a mission to persuade Americans that theirs was a modern culture—a mission that he pursued by mounting exhibitions on modern architecture and design, and starting the museum's department of film, headed by the formidable Iris Barry and dedicated to the proposition that Hollywood movies were part of the modern movement in the arts.

The other prong of the revisionist thesis was the attack on the critical doctrine, dominant in the nineteen-fifties and into the nineteen-sixties, that the conditions of a painting's production and reception are irrelevant to its significance as art. On this point, the revisionists were right. Everything was shaped by Cold War imperatives after 1945, because everything is always shaped by circumstance. The "apolitical" interpretation of abstract painting derived, quite self-consciously, from a politics. Both Greenberg, the critic most responsible for the view that Abstract Expressionism was pure painting, and Harold Rosenberg, the critic most responsible for the view that it was pure expression, were left-wing anti-Communists who had been associated with the anti-Stalinist *Partisan Review* in the nineteen-forties, and whose theories of art were formed in reaction to Soviet aesthetic dogma, according to which abstraction was individualist self-indulgence. Greenberg and Rosenberg were both outspoken champions of the Americanness of Abstract Expressionism. Rosenberg called it "American action painting."



"How do you know when you're done appreciating?"

Still, no work reduces to a single context. When you stand before Pollock's "Lavender Mist," you do not think about "artistic free enterprise" or the C.I.A. or the cultural politics of *Partisan Review*. You think about how a painter could have taken all he had experienced across a creative threshold that no one had crossed before, and produced this particular thing. The painting's importance for a certain strand of Cold War cultural politics is part of the story of how it got to us, a generation or more later, and that history is worth knowing, because bits and pieces of it—the existentialist encounter, the "American" indifference to painterly decorum—still cling to it. After all, other ways of understanding Abstract Expressionist paintings were once possible, for images are highly malleable (one of the reasons they make poor instruments for propaganda). It might easily have been argued that Abstract Expressionist works are hostile to the spirit of liberal democracy, that they reflect a totalitarian aesthetics—monumental, peremptory constructions that make us feel our insignificance.

Pollock's paintings have other contexts that matter. It is not the least of the many pleasures of Jed Perl's commodious new book, "New Art City: Manhattan at Mid-Century" (Knopf; $35), that it has scarcely a word to say about the Cold War. The book is about a moment when painters, sculptors, dancers, poets, and performance artists, Americans and émigrés, converged on a city, and about the difference the city made to what they were able to imagine. Its sympathies are entirely with the individual artist and the act of making. Perl calls the decade after the war a Silver Age; he is in love with the moment, and he makes it glow. He also makes it unfamiliar again. Unlike most histories of American art, "New

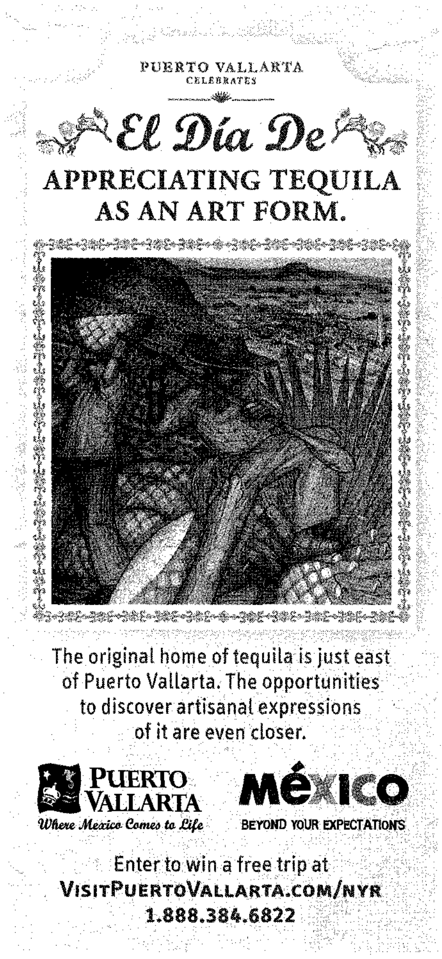
Art City" does not put the Abstract Expressionists at the center of the stage. Perl doesn't especially *like* the drip paintings. The bookends of his story are not Pollock and Pollock's evil twin, Andy Warhol; they are Hans Hofmann and Fairfield Porter.

And there are reasons to feel that the claims about MOMA and its devotion to abstract art over all else are exaggerated. In 1994, Michael Kimmelman, now the *Times'* chief art critic, published a report on the history of the museum's purchase and exhibition of Abstract Expressionist paintings, in "Studies in Modern Art," a MOMA publication. His conclusion, recently confirmed by David Caute in his valuable history of Cold War cultural diplomacy, "The Dancer Defects" (Oxford; 2003), was that there was no unusual pattern of preference for Abstract Expressionism at the museum—some people at the time believed that Barr was rather late in recognizing its importance—and no record of international exhibitions specially emphasizing Abstract Expressionist works until the late nineteen-fifties, when a show called "The New American Painting" was sent abroad by MOMA in coördination with the International Arts Council, an organization affiliated with the museum and financed by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and the U.S.I.A., which provided some publicity. In the catalogue for the exhibition, the show was referred to as "benevolent propaganda for foreign intelligentsia." By then, Pollock was dead, and Abstract Expressionism was no longer new.

Still, Barr was nothing if not a public-relations man. "Since 1929 he had worked to build an audience for modern art," Perl writes. "Some might say that he had invented that audience." He did, eventually, see the significance of Abstract Expressionism as an art form, and—always crucial for him—the importance of giving it popular appeal. If an association with Americanism and Cold War politics helped, then Barr was happy to propose one. In February, 1949, when Pollock had started on the short, great period in which he created the drip paintings, *Time* ran a mocking story referring to him as the "darling of the highbrow cult." In March, Barr wrote a letter to Henry Luce, the publisher of *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune*, to propose that his magazines consider changing their attitude toward modern art. He suggested that Abstract Expressionism might be regarded as "artistic free enterprise," and he reminded Luce that attacking abstract art was something that totalitarian regimes did. In August, *Life* published a lavish piece on Pollock, with photographs of him at work by Arnold Newman. It made Pollock famous—the "action painter," the very type of the modern American culture hero.

Cultural diplomacy is a tricky business in a democracy. It's awkward to promote art officially by claiming that it is free from official constraints, and it is especially awkward if the art is, in fact, unpopular. Cold Warriors in the nineteen-fifties often found themselves in the position of propagandizing for American values by exhibiting art that was manifestly élite, and attacking the Soviet Union for mandating that art appeal to the common man. In 1952, Barr wrote a piece for the *Times Magazine*, "Is Modern Art Communistic?," in which he tried to argue, in effect, that "democratic" is a totalitarian standard for judging art. He wasn't wrong, but it meant that a lot of congressmen were behaving like totalitarians.

Then again, the American Artists Professional League wasn't wrong when it complained, about the "Advancing American Art" exhibition, that modern art was "not indigenous to our soil." The native style in the United States had been regionalist; mid-century modernism was internationalist, and the Abstract Expressionists, all of whom lived in New York, worked in an art scene dominated by European émigrés. Pollock's first mentor, at the Art Students League of New York, was Thomas Hart Benton, the leader of what was known as "American Scene painting," and a populist who hoped to make American painting as prestigious as Europe's. Benton left New York in 1935 and returned to Missouri. He thought that the East Coast art establishment had been taken over by Communists. "Communism is a joke everywhere in the United States except New York," he said. This was not the sort of artist the cultural Cold Warriors went out of their way to promote. His Americanism was much too pure. ♦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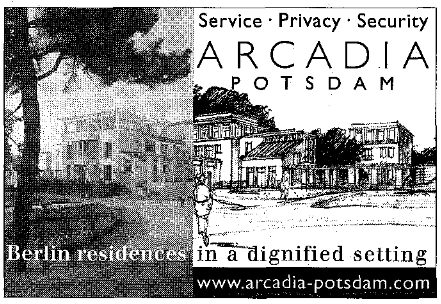
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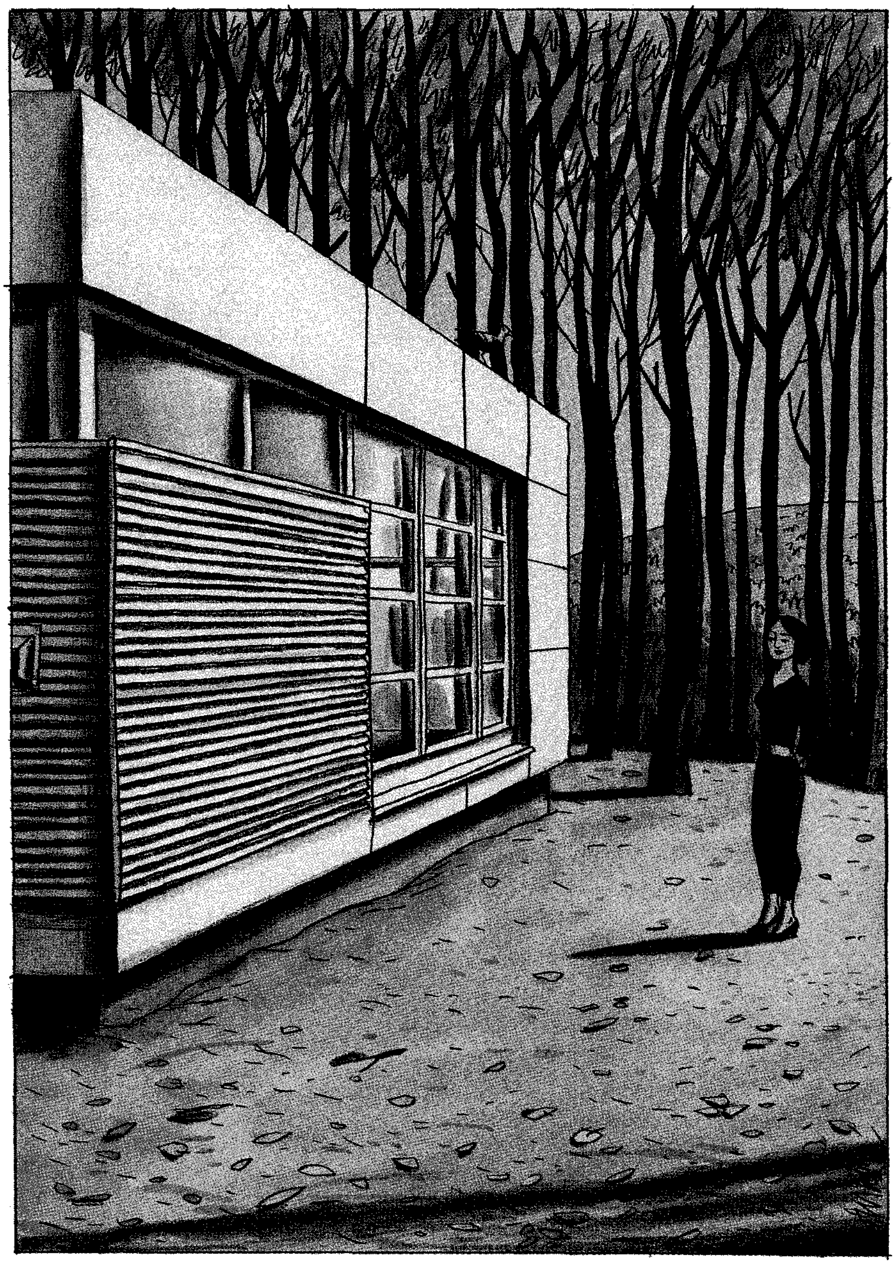
THE SKY LINE

SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED

A modern way to make a modern house.

BY PAUL GOLDBERGER

It may be that the future of American housing is visible on a seventy-acre farm in Perryville, Missouri, a town of some eight thousand people in the rolling hills of the southeastern part of the state. The farm is owned by Rocío Romero, a thirty-four-year-old architect. In 2000, her parents asked her to design a simple, inexpensive vacation home in Chile, where they grew up. Romero came up with a sleek, metal-clad box that she named the L.V., for the place where it was built—Laguna Verde, a beach town an hour and a half west of Santiago. It wasn't quite as cheap as her parents had hoped it would be—the cost was thirty-five thousand dollars—but during the construction process Romero realized that she had some ideas about how to attack a problem that has frustrated architects for most of the past century: the fact that modern houses aren't produced in a more mechanized manner. Apart from the mobile-home industry, no one turning out houses on an assembly line has made an impact in the housing business. Most mobile homes are aluminum-sided banalities that are supposed to look like traditional suburban houses but fool nobody, and whose sole virtue is that they are cheap. Modern architecture, of course, tends to be expensive. It often looks machine-made and features the latest technology, yet modern houses are almost always built largely by hand, even when they are intended to embody the aesthetic of the computer age.



Rocío Romero's silver box appears to float a few inches above the ground.

JACQUES DE LOUSTAL

Romero's original L.V. fit the usual pattern of a laboriously designed house that looked, deceptively, like a mass-produced industrial object. In 2001, she resolved to make a house that could be manufactured in one place and erected in another. The L.V., she decided, could be replicated ad infinitum, and sold as a prefabricated kit. She and her husband, Cale Bradford, a health-care executive, were living in St. Louis, where Romero had set up an office—Bradford comes from Missouri—and they bought a farm seventy-five miles south of the city. On a clearing overlooking a broad meadow, Romero erected an improved version of the L.V. house, which she could use as a sales model as well as a weekend getaway.

The L.V. is eleven hundred and fifty square feet, with two bedrooms, two bathrooms, a large living-dining area, and a small kitchen. (A stretched-out version, which Romero calls the L.V.L.—Laguna Verde Large—has room for a third bedroom or an expanded master suite.) Romero's farm now features a second prototype, the Fish Camp, a one-room metal cottage on stilts, which she placed overlooking a winding creek; sliding glass doors flood the interior with light, making it an ideal artist's studio. Later this month, she plans to erect a sample of her third design, the Base Camp, a medium-sized guest house, as soon as it rolls off the assembly line at a factory in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Romero's farm recently became her

full-time residence. She has turned a pair of old hog barns into a workshop, where two employees assemble the wall panels that make up the L.V. kits; the process takes about a week. So far, Romero has sold twenty-five kits, starting at thirty-two thousand dollars each. If you buy one of Romero's L.V. kits, you do not get an entire house. You get the exterior walls and the floors, the roof framing, special assembly tools, and lots of instructions. It is up to builders to construct a foundation according to Romero's plans, and to add such items as windows, doors, electricity, plumbing, and a roof, for which the architect provides exacting specifications. Buyers pay for shipping their future house on a flatbed truck, which runs roughly $2.25 per mile from Perryville. (One of the reasons Romero leaves out a lot of the house, she says, is that her system allows contractors to finish the work in accordance with local building codes. It also allows her to fit the parts she manufactures onto a single truck.) The final cost of one of Romero's houses depends on the cost of transportation, labor, and materials—it is cheaper to build an L.V. in Toledo than in East Hampton—but it tends to be roughly three to four times the price of the kit, or around a hundred and ten dollars per square foot. Today, most architect-designed houses cost more than three hundred dollars a square foot, and in many parts of the country they can easily be twice that. Even with all that is left out, Romero's house is a bargain, especially when you compare it with putting up a modern house by the likes of Richard Meier or Charles Gwathmey.

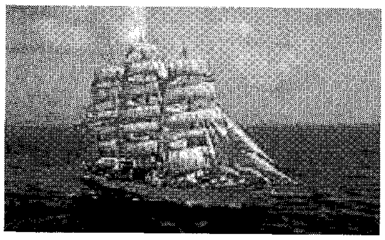
When you drive along the country road that leads to Romero's farm, you go through a landscape of fields, passing a Colonial house or two and a couple of mobile homes that have been fixed up to resemble suburban tract houses. It's not Tobacco Road, but it's not Greenwich, either. Romero's farm looks, at first, as if it had seen better days. The hog barns are close to the road and appear forlorn and abandoned. I drove around the barns, and the landscape opened up. In front of me was a silver box, roughly fifty feet long and twenty-five feet wide, that appeared to float a few inches above the ground. Part of the façade was covered in corrugated Galvalume, a zinc-alloy-coated steel, and the rest of it was a mixture of flat metal panels and glass. It shimmered in the sun, a benign alien in the landscape.

The L.V. is an exceptionally beautiful house. Other designers, such as Charlie Lazor and the firm Resolution: 4 Architecture, are building innovative prefabricated structures, but Romero's designs stand out for their clarity, simplicity, and grace. There is nothing funky about the L.V. Romero has hidden the gutters inside the structure and made the exterior walls higher than the slightly downward-slanting roof, so that when you look at her house all you see is a clean, pure box. The proportions are pleasing, and the details elegant; the foundation supports have been recessed slightly, giving the house that appearance of hovering.

The interior of Romero's L.V. is clean, white, and pointedly austere. Light pours in: the sides have floor-to-ceiling glass windows in a handsome grid pattern, and the back wall consists of a series of sliding-glass panels. The living room contains four black leather chairs, a glass coffee table, and a flat-screen television mounted on one wall. There are only three decorative objects: an old jukebox and a pair of Kennedy and Nixon posters from the 1960 Presidential election. They all belong to Bradford, who has a collection of objects from the nineteen-fifties and sixties that he displays in strict accord with the minimalist restraint of his wife.

There is something almost retro about Romero's modernism—she's on the cutting edge of process, but her aesthetic is comfortably familiar. She wants to build houses for the sort of people who, if they were rich and living in Chicago, would probably be on a waiting list for apartments in Mies van der Rohe's famous towers on Lake Shore Drive. "One of my clients calls this her poor man's Mies," Romero said to me soon after I arrived at the house. "I always wonder if I should take that as a compliment. To be compared to Mies is one thing, but to be called the poor man?" She paused. "But I want this to be affordable," she said. "I want to bring modern design to people. Otherwise, what's the point of prefab?"

Romero's parents emigrated from Chile in 1973, two years after she was born, and she grew up in San Diego. She went to Berkeley and then to SCI-Arc, an independent architectural school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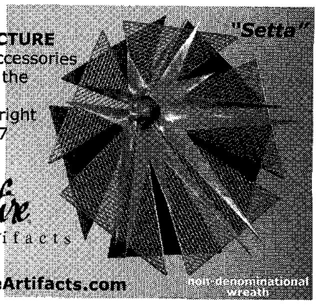

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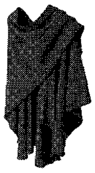
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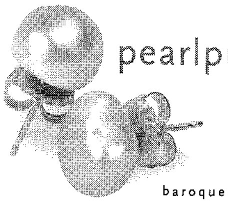
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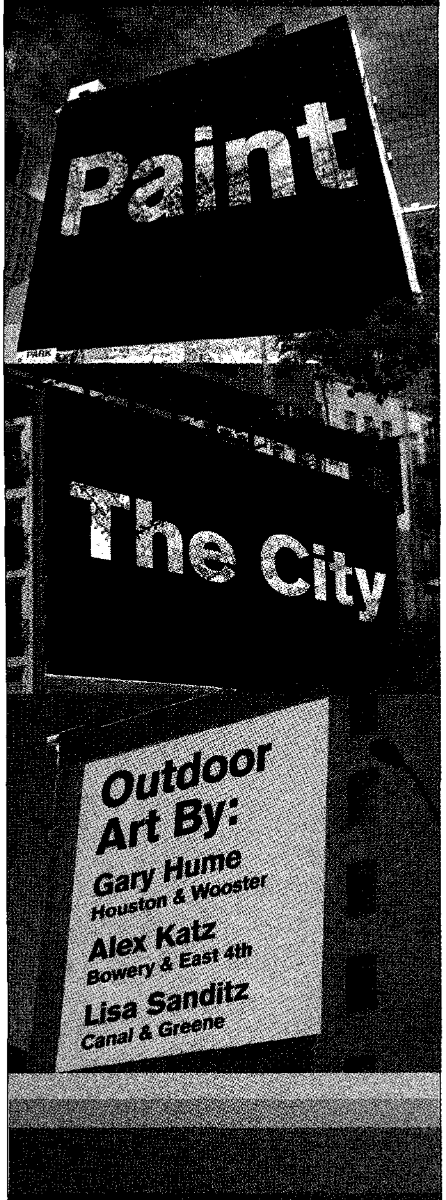

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in Los Angeles known for its commitment to environmentalism, avant-garde design, and alternative methods. She has not shaken off her Southern California roots, even though she hasn't lived there for three years and says that she feels completely settled in rural Missouri. When I met her at her farm, last month, she was wearing black slacks, a white T-shirt, and Chanel sunglasses. She has bluntly cropped black hair and an easygoing manner that is both cheerful and vague, but she focusses quickly when the talk turns to I-joists or bolting systems. She couldn't quite remember whether she and Bradford had bought their farm two years ago or three, but she knew every aspect of her manufacturing system, and when we walked into one of the hog barns she pointed to an eight-foot-long sandwich of foam, corrugated metal, and particleboard coated with a veneer of resin—one of the panels for the next L.V. kit to be shipped—and explained in detail how she had engineered the panel to withstand the winds of a Category 5 hurricane.

"A lot of the people who come to me say they like modern architecture but never felt comfortable with architects," she said later, over lunch at a local diner. "They have heard nightmare stories and they don't want to be someone's guinea pig. Or they've seen things in the magazines and they don't want to take on the challenge of doing it themselves." Romero decided that if she was going to succeed in the business of manufacturing modern houses she had to do something more than produce a good-looking design; she had to make it easy to build. She devised the assembly process so that contractors, who are often wary of factory-made houses, would think of themselves as her partner, not her adversary. With this in mind, she created a system of color-coded stakes and cables of specific lengths to help contractors position the wall panels. "Not everyone is an architect," she said. "To empower people, you have to come up with this stuff—it's not goofy. My mom, she isn't very visual, so I had to keep coming up with stuff for her. You have to assume that people will make mistakes; a design needs wiggle room."

Putting together a house like the L.V. involves all the frustrations of assembling a china cabinet from Ikea, but on a much larger scale. Instead of small pieces of wood, there are hundred-pound panels. "It can take three people to push the floor panels tightly together," Romero said. The kit contains straps that facilitate this process. It also includes a video of her own house being assembled, because, she believes, people don't read manuals.

Romero originally thought that the primary market for the L.V. would be California, but most of her customers have turned out to be in the East or in the Midwest. The first kit Romero sold was to a couple in Virginia, Barry Bless and Jennifer Watson, who put it on a six-acre site in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Bless, a musician, and Watson, an architectural photographer, finished their house this past March. They did much of the construction work themselves, and it took about a year; the final cost was ninety-five thousand dollars. The couple christened their L.V. the Luminhaus. As soon as it was done, they put up a Web site filled with Watson's photographs of the house amid fall foliage and winter snow, offering the house for rent at eight hundred dollars a week. In six weeks, it was booked for the rest of the year.

The couple first saw Romero's model in a slick coffee-table book titled "Prefab." The book contains images of more glamorous, and more impractical, designs by élite architects such as Shigeru Ban and Greg Lynn. Bless and Watson, who have both worked as carpenters themselves, have mixed feelings about the chic aspect of modernist prefabricated houses. Romero's design, they found, was handsome but unpretentious. "A neighbor said to me that the house looked like a trailer—a very nice trailer," Bless said with satisfaction. He relishes the curiosity that his new home has aroused. "This house is aware that it doesn't belong, and I really like that," he said. "We didn't pretend to blend in."

Romero's customers seem to become not just clients but acolytes. Bless, for one, said that he would like to acquire more land and put up a colony of prefab houses for rent near his house in Virginia. Romero seems eager to see the creation of her own Levittowns. I asked her how big she wanted her business to become, and how many prefabricated houses she would like to produce. "Oh, millions and millions," she said immediately. "The more product you can push through, the better you can be." ♦

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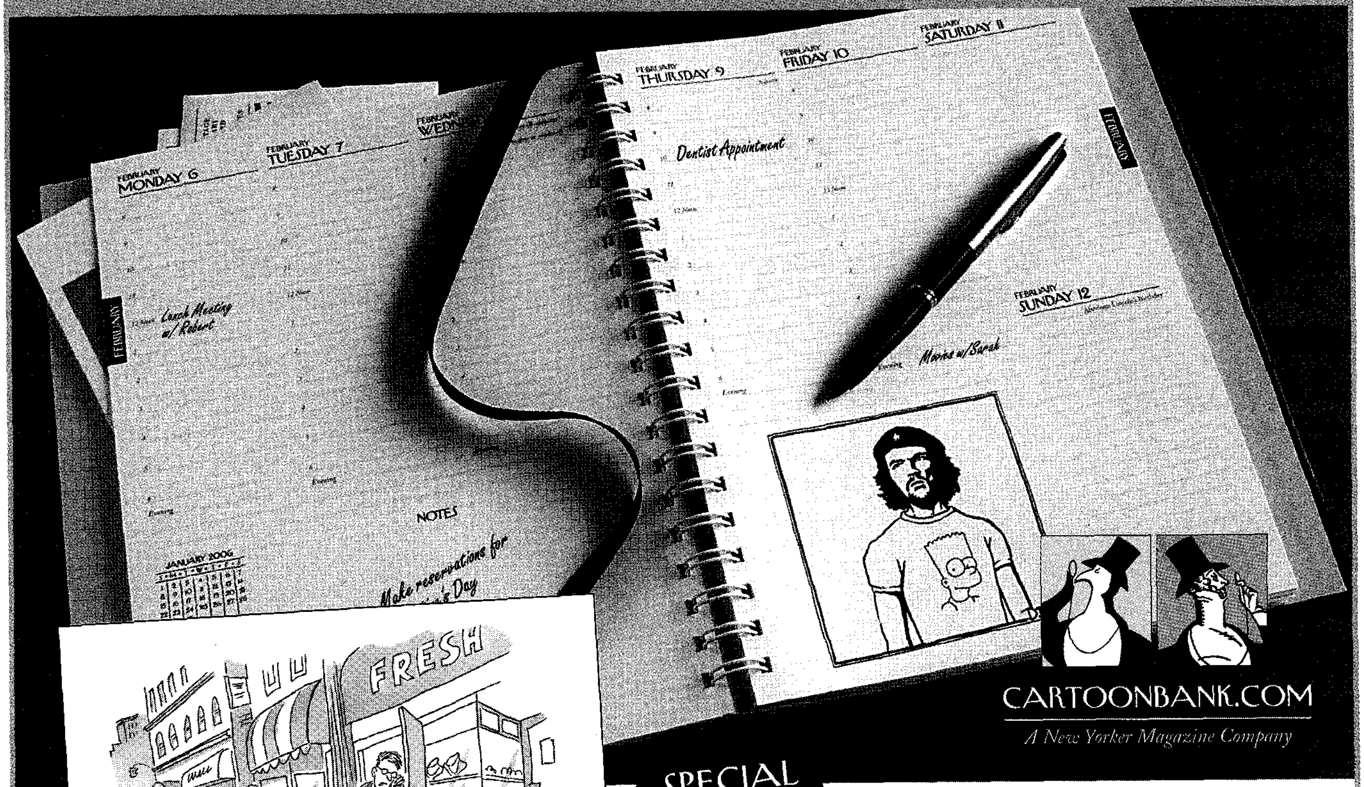

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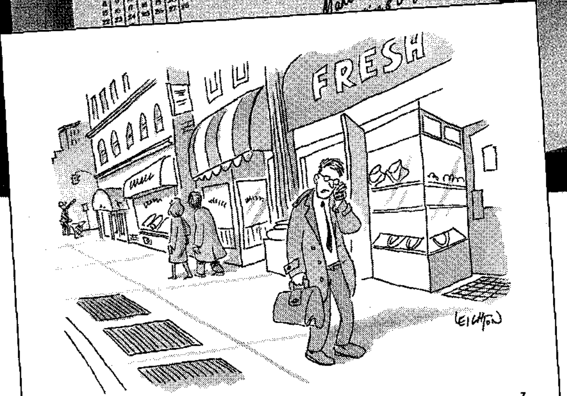

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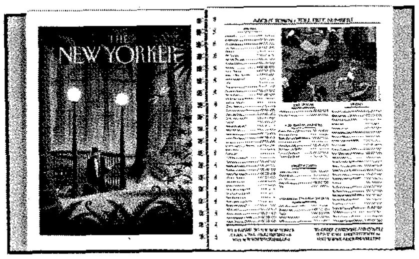

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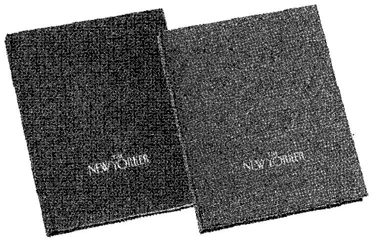

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THE THEATRE

OLD HAT

Richard Greenberg on aging, and an Ibsen restaging.

BY HILTON ALS

How many times will we have to put up with her—that gnome-like old crone, usually in some form of tracksuit, whose potty-mouthed utterances silence all interlocutors? She has caused trouble and strife without blinking an eye in countless films and TV shows, from "Where's Poppa?" to "The Golden Girls." Sadie (Ann Guilbert), the nasty old broad in Richard Greenberg's "A Naked Girl on the Appian Way" (a Roundabout production at the American Airlines), is even meaner than most. After she walks, white-haired and goggle-eyed, into what she thinks is the Hamptons house of her much hated former daughter-in-law, Sadie calls out, "Elaine? You dumb bitch, where've you been?" And we're off. For the rest of the play, Sadie piles profanity on top of profanity, devouring scones as she does so. Her bile serves only to confirm our worst fears about old age, especially where women are concerned: it is a sour vat of discontent, with no second chances and no way out save malice or death.

Plays, it goes without saying, can and do act as mouthpieces for their authors' ideas and visions. Here, Greenberg's distinctly American age phobia dovetails with his fear of women: he believes, it seems, that once a woman is no longer "pretty"—and thus no longer useful to a man's eye or heart—she becomes a wreck of negative feelings. It is those feelings that Bess (Jill Clayburgh), a cookbook author whose house Sadie has actually stumbled into, tries to keep at bay with her plasma-screen smile. Bess wants her life to be as sweet and as obvious as a sitcom. A contented wife to Jeffrey (Richard Thomas), and a loving mother to her three racially diverse, adopted, now adult children, she dices and bakes and listens to Sadie with the forbearance of a woman who has never wanted anything more or less than her own and her family's happiness.

She has achieved it, in a sense. The blond highlights in her hair match her tasteful mustard-colored blouse. Her kitchen is well stocked. And, when Jeffrey expresses some doubt about what he should do with the rest of his life, Bess takes it all in stride, cheering him on as she prunes her basil. She herself has plenty to look forward to: two of her children, Thad (Matthew Morrison) and the Dominican-born Juliet (Susan Kelechi Watson), are returning from a holiday abroad together. Of course, their homecoming should be a cause for celebration. And it is, until they reveal that they've fallen in love—with each other. Bess is the first to catch them in the act. Descending the stairs of her perfectly appointed home, she discovers Thad and Juliet in a deep lip-lock. The phone rings. With a smile that threatens to split her face in two, Bess—ever polite, ever the queen of her own castle—answers it with a pleasant "Hello?" that suggests that she's evading the issue even as she stares at it.

Greenberg enjoys dramatizing themes—homosexuality and sports in "Take Me Out" (2003); the business of art in "The Violet Hour" (2003)—and he wants "Appian Way" to show us that nothing in upper-middle-class life appears to be what it is. But the cacophony of one-liners and the rush of secrets exposed in the last minutes make this fast-paced show a rather shallow experience. It is the playwright who has failed here, because the actors—particularly Clayburgh—give the production their all.

Now sixty-one, Clayburgh came of age as a star during that brief yet brilliant time in the late seventies and early eighties when the anti-glamorous—the real—was in vogue. While actors like Robert De Niro and Brad Dourif offered a view into fractured maleness, Clayburgh played, in such films as "An Unmarried Woman" (1978) and "I'm Dancing as Fast as I Can" (1982), extraordinary

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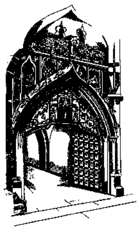

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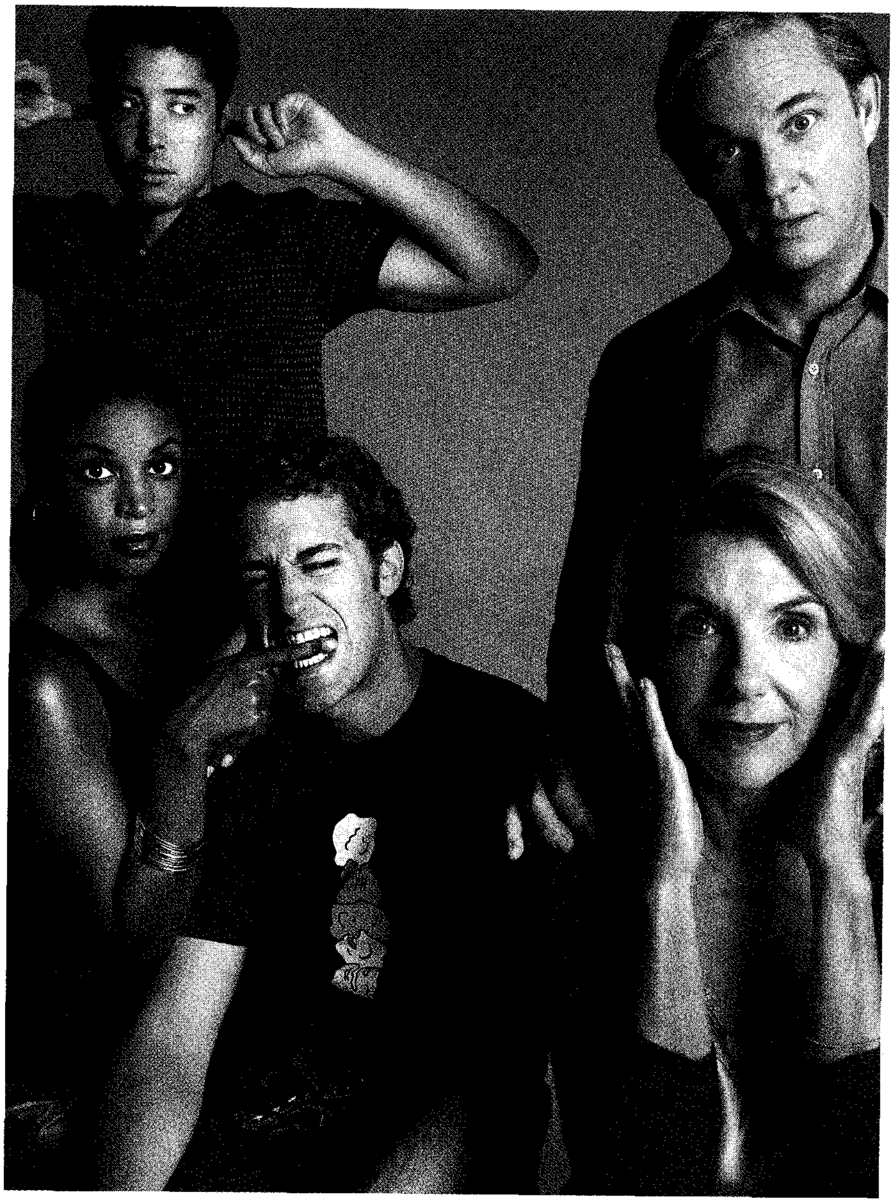
women living ordinary lives—women like Ann Beattie characters come to life. One always felt comfortable with Clayburgh, because, despite her charm, she never quite seemed to believe that she was a star.

Unfortunately, if you're a fan of her past work "Appian Way" is not the play to see. Clayburgh is a physically and emotionally relaxed actress: she is open to the script, to the character, to the audience, and to the director. But Doug Hughes, the director of "Appian Way," does not make good use of her strengths. Nor does the play, whose many characters manage to sound alike: somewhat reasonable, somewhat distanced, and all misunderstanding what they're trying to say even as they say it.

Henrik Ibsen: so necessary and yet so boring. Actually, the boredom that one feels when watching the nineteenth-century Norwegian playwright's works has little to do with the conventions within which they were written. Rather, it is the contemporary theatre world in New York—its producers and directors—who have let us down, by failing to reimagine Ibsen's work in a way that would make it relevant to today's audiences. There are, of course, exceptions—for instance, Lee Breuer's brilliant conceptualization of "A Doll's House" at St. Ann's Warehouse, a few seasons back, in which the male characters were played by dwarfs and many of the women were nearly six feet tall; and the Dutch director Ivo van Hove's controversial staging of "Hedda Gabler," complete with videos and tattoos, at the New York Theatre Workshop, last year. On the whole, though, Ibsen is confined to musty productions that seem to emerge from the stacks of a long-forgotten library. All of which obscures one of the playwright's notable ambitions: to expose the uncomfortable truths about women and about the nature of power. Less fantastical than Strindberg, Ibsen was no less icy than his fellow-Scandinavian in his dissection of our all too human desire to control our—and others'—destinies, no matter how much of ourselves we must subjugate or abandon along the way. Ibsen still matters, because the oligarchy still matters—when it comes to defining nations, as well as the lives of their citizens.



James Yaegashi, Susan Kelechi Watson, Matthew Morrison, Jill Clayburgh, and Richard Thomas in "A Naked Girl on the Appian Way." Photograph by Max Vadukul.

Ibsen's writing tends to be hefty and naturalistic. It becomes dramatic when he portrays the destruction of an individualist's intellect: Hedda burning the much labored-over manuscript of her husband's rival, or the anti-hero Halvard Solness suppressing his colleague's career in "The Master Builder" (now in revival at the Pearl). Ably directed by Shepard Sobel, this production of "The Master Builder" offers a number of insights into Ibsen's thoughts on failure and on triumph. Sobel is a classicist, so there are no surprises in his staging. Instead, he focusses on explicating the architect Solness (Dan Daily), and his epic vision of himself as a god in human form—a "master builder"—whose work not only defines nature but surpasses it.

To realize his grandiose plan, Solness swallows whole the weaker people who must feed it—among them his wily, long-suffering wife (Robin Leslie Brown). With her red curls pinned around her sharp face, like a woman in a Toulouse-Lautrec painting, Brown delivers an astonishing performance. Equally arresting is Sean McNall, as Ragnar, the underling whose artistry is appropriated by Solness. Small and delicate, Ragnar, who struggles with his commitment to his father and to his faithless love, is regarded with cold pity by Solness, who looks on the world with the selfishness of the artist. Sad to say, though, McNall and Brown are the only relevant features in an otherwise embalmed, overly historicized production. ♦

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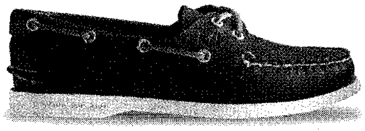

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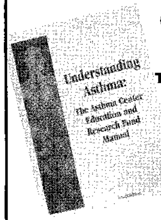

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

BEST FRIENDS

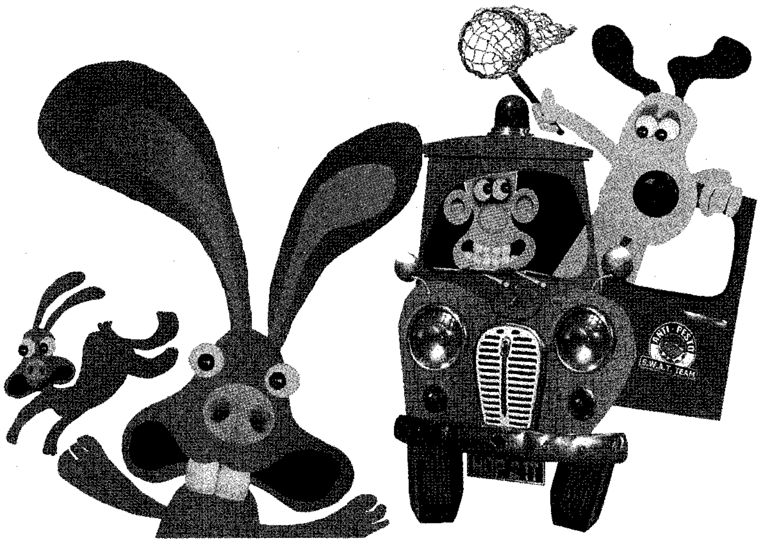
"Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit" and "In Her Shoes."

BY ANTHONY LANE

If Jessica Alba can have a successful movie career, why can't plasticine? Both are delicately molded, pliably expressive, and, after a while, surprisingly warm to the touch. Ms. Alba, however, may lack the emotional range, the fire in the belly, that would enable her to master the role of Wallace. For the uninitiated, Wallace is a clumping, hairless, dough-hued single white male of indeterminate age. His accent, like his moral outlook on life, places him in Yorkshire, England. Onscreen, Wallace looms large, yet in reality he is a plasticine maquette, no more than a foot tall. He would pop quite snugly into the pocket of Jessica Alba's jeans. How he would like it in there is another matter.

Wallace lives with Gromit, an intellectually gifted dog who compensates for his want of a mouth—normally a useful accoutrement—by cultivating vast reserves of long-suffering nobility. He waits on Wallace, yet he stands as the culminating figure in a fine tradition of servants who outstrip their masters. Jeeves would claim this mutt as a kindred spirit, as would Sancho Panza. Gromit's moods are best charted through his shelf-like brow, which can droop in dismayed fatigue, pucker with anxiety, or harden into a disapproving frown. King Kong was similarly endowed.

Man and hound alike are the invention of Nick Park, the British sovereign of stop-motion animation. If my sums add up, Park is statistically the most highly prized filmmaker in the world.



Nick Park's Wallace and Gromit in their first full-length feature film.

STEPHEN KRONINGER

He has made three short films starring Wallace and Gromit, all of which were nominated for best short animated film at the Academy Awards. The first of them, "A Grand Day Out" (1989), failed to win, although the actual winner was *another* Nick Park project, the wondrous "Creature Comforts." Both of his next pictures, "The Wrong Trousers" (1993) and "A Close Shave" (1995), proved victorious on the night. It is, I suppose, conceivable that the duo's latest jape, a full-length feature entitled "Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit," five years in the making, might not secure another Oscar, but any such failure will raise calls for a congressional inquiry.

The plot brims with Euripidean horror. Somebody, or something, is steal-

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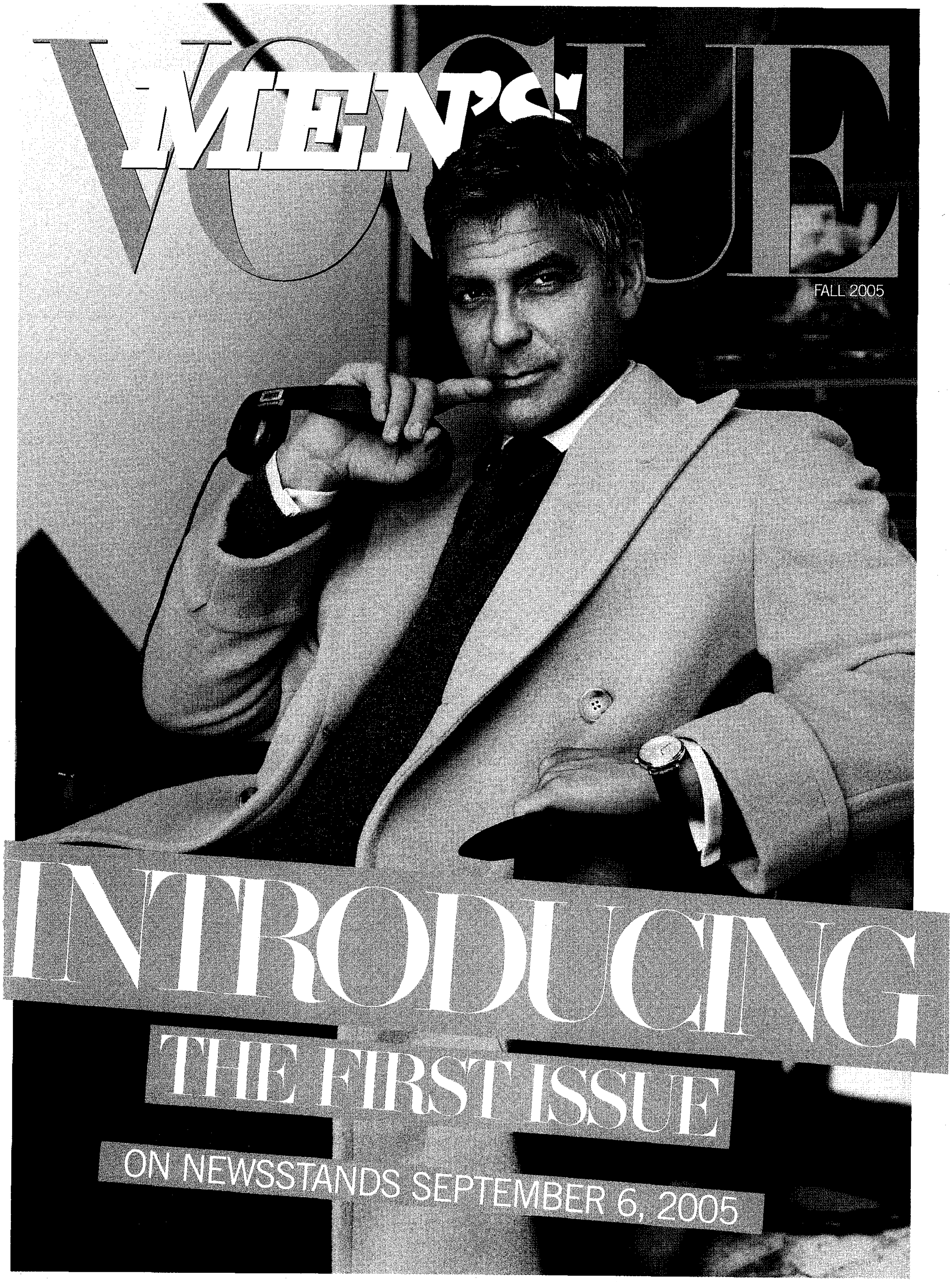
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"Unscripted Comedy and Conversation," an evening with the cast, hosted by *New Yorker* humor writer Andy Borowitz.

IN CONVERSATION WITH
SEYMOUR M. HERSH
The *New Yorker* staff writer talks with Professor Stephen J. Berry about investigative journalism.

FILM PREVIEW
"STAY"
BY MARC FORSTER
Preview screening by the director of "Finding Neverland" and "Monster's Ball," followed by a conversation with *New Yorker* editor Ben Greenman.

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ing and consuming garden vegetables, and it is up to Wallace and Gromit (now operating as a limited company, Anti-Pesto, for all your vermin-removal needs) to track down and neutralize the culprits. They capture a throng of delinquent rabbits, and Wallace—whose aspirations tend to exceed his grasp—tries to brainwash them, with a view to erasing their herbivorous desires. The plan backfires, and the outcome is a ravening mutant bunny the size of a polar bear. This endangers everything, not least Wallace's burgeoning love for Lady Tottington, the local grandee, and Gromit's even deeper love for the bomb-shaped melon that he has cultivated in the greenhouse, and upon which he likes to bestow a lonely caress.

The fact that the movie's climax, with Gromit piloting a bulbous airplane, so closely resembles the end of "A Close Shave" is neither a coincidence nor a fault. If anything, it strengthens my conviction that what Park has done is resurrect not just the spirit but, as it were, the bodily science of early comedy. Like Chuck Jones, and, further back, like Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd, Park is unafraid of the formulaic—of bops on the head, of the unattainable beloved, of gadgetry gone awry—because he sees what beauty there can be in minor, elaborate variations on a basic theme. He knows that, when we call a stunt death-defying, that means life-enhancing; the breakneck is funny because everything in sight gets broken except the hero's neck.

The world loves Wallace and Gromit. (In Japan, Park is on the brink of acquiring divine status.) This is not a small thing; the history of cinema is, in a sense, the epidemiology of mass appeal, and ever since Charlie Chaplin filmmakers have striven to re-create the contagion of his allure. More by instinct than by calculation, Park has followed Chaplin both in his fondness for the homely—for our staying inside with a pet and a hot drink—and in his zest for the perilous unknown. Wallace is equipped in the British style of the nineteen-fifties, with teapot, toaster, sleeveless sweater, and tie; the new film expands to show a whole town built on the same lines, complete with dependable bobby, silly vicar, and a posh house to whose chatelaine everyone defers. The setup is as feudal and contented as Wodehouse's Blandings, and what Tony Blair must think of it heaven knows, for it represents all that his history-scorning administration has sought to wipe away, or, at any rate, to forget. Yet, at the same time, Wallace fancies himself as forward-looking, his mission being to bust crime and construct the machinery of the future; the dénouement of "A Close Shave," though packed with bleating sheep, was also an adoring gesture toward "Terminator." There is something for everybody here: an unholy mixture of Philip Larkin and Bruce Wayne.

Does "Curse of the Were-Rabbit" maintain the pace? It does, although that pace is so unflagging that, strangely enough, it veers closer to outright panic than its short predecessors did. Wallace and Gromit have almost no time in which merely to sit around, and that is when we envy them most. Again, the parallel is with silent films. Purists will insist that the best of Park is to be found in "The Wrong Trousers," just as Chaplin's "One A.M." and Keaton's "One Week"—note the simplicity of the titles—achieve an ideal distillation that is denied to, say, "City Lights." Still, the new film displays all of Park's virtues, down to the cheesy puns in which he specializes (some of them, for the first time, veined with blue), and to the cheese on which Wallace prefers to dine. Children will revere the result, and adults will permit themselves a childish pleasure in the streamlined gags—and, incidentally, in the absence of children from the screen. How consoling it is, once again, to hear Wallace's wobbly cry, resigned to the onset of chaos, "Everything's under control." That is always a lie, and we always want to believe it.

It's been a long while since a Hollywood movie hinged on a poem by Elizabeth Bishop. We are thus indebted to "In Her Shoes," in which Cameron Diaz sits in a hospital room and reads Bishop's "One Art" to a blind patient. Diaz plays a kooky—or, as we used to say, annoying—wastrel named Maggie, who suffers from reading difficulties, and there is something touching about the way in which her voice halts and trips along the lines. Curtis Hanson's film has revealed her to be a lost girl, biting at a world for which she has little taste, and Bishop's wise calmative—"The art of losing isn't hard to master"—is just the companionable tonic that Maggie needs.

The art of compressing, on the other hand, is extremely hard to master, and Hanson seems to have lost it. After a run of sure-footed pictures, from "L.A. Confidential" to "Wonder Boys" and "8 Mile," he has now decided to spend a hundred and thirty minutes telling us about a pair of squabbling sisters. Maggie is one, and the other is Rose (Toni Collette), a starchy lawyer who lives, though seldom loves, in Philadelphia. The one soft spot in Rose's ascetic life is a closet lined with hundreds of shoes, ranging from the fancy to the fetishistic. (Despite the title, this feels wrong for Rose, who looks as if she were born in flats.) Anyway, Maggie keeps borrowing the damn things, spilling ice cream on them, and so forth. She also makes out with Rose's only lover and crashes in her apartment, all of which leads to a split. From this, you may care to predict that the sisters will finally, and weepily, find reconciliation, but I couldn't possibly comment.

Although "In Her Shoes" aims to rub along, with that scuffed worldliness which Hanson has made his own, it keeps bumping into the archness of the romantic-domestic genre. Hence those shoes; hence Rose's girlish discovery that if she quits her high-flown, man-encumbered job and walks dogs for a living instead she will be so much more fulfilled (doesn't she need the money?); and hence Maggie's just *happening* to find a stash of unopened letters at the back of a drawer, which nudge her into seeking her estranged grandmother, Ella (Shirley MacLaine). Ella lives in Florida, in an old people's home, or, as Maggie says, "a retirement community for active seniors." From here, the film divides its time between the cautious Rose, tiptoeing into love with her former colleague Simon (Mark Feuerstein), the perfect young Jewish man, and the sunnier Maggie, dropping sex in favor of new and unthreatening friends like Mrs. Lefkowitz (Francine Beers), the perfect elderly Jewish lady. Some of the lines—written by Susannah Grant, who adapted Jennifer Weiner's novel—have a cozy kick to them ("I'll take it to my grave," Mrs. Lefkowitz says, guarding a secret, and adding, "Probably tomorrow"), yet not once does this ruffled sweetness seem like Hanson's natural terrain. "Wonder Boys" took emotional risks, daring to suggest that with age comes not wisdom but confusion and crummy robes, whereas everything in the new film is designed to slot together with an optimistic click. Maggie, her literacy problems magically dismissed, even rounds things off by declaiming *another* poem; but it's only E. E. Cummings, and it comes too late. ♦

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Volume LXXXII, No. 32, October 17, 2005. The New Yorker (ISSN 0028-792X) is published weekly (except for six combined issues: Jan. 24 & 31, Feb. 14 & 21, June 13 & 20, July 11 & 18, Aug. 8 & 15, Dec. 26 & Jan. 2) by The Condé Nast Publications, which is a division of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. PRINCIPAL OFFICE: The Condé Nast Building, 4 Times Square, New York, NY 10036. Louis Cona, vice-president and publisher; William Li, associate publisher; Ronda Carnegie, advertising director; Gail Day, advertising director; Jamie Engel, advertising director; Susan Harrington, director of creative services; Ilene Danuff, marketing services director; Douglas Chilcott, associate creative services director/promotion; L. Paul Robertson, associate creative services director/events; Jacqueline Cinguina, director of integrated marketing; Judy Safir, director of finance; Edward Klaris, general counsel. Advance Magazine Publishers Inc.: S. I. Newhouse, Jr., chairman; Charles H. Townsend, president and C.E.O.; John W. Bellando, executive vice-president and C.O.O.; Jill Bright, executive vice-president–human resources; John Buese, executive vice-president–chief information officer; David Orlin, senior vice-president–strategic sourcing; Robert Bennis, senior vice-president–real estate; Maurie Perl, senior vice president-chief communications officer. Shared services provided by Advance Magazine Group: Steven T. Florio, Advance Magazine Group vice chairman; David B. Chemidlin, senior vice-president–general manager, shared services center. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement No. 40644503. Canadian Goods and Services Tax Registration No. R123242885. Canada Post return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: P.O. Box 874, Station Main, Markham, ON L3P 8L4.

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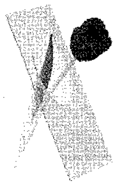

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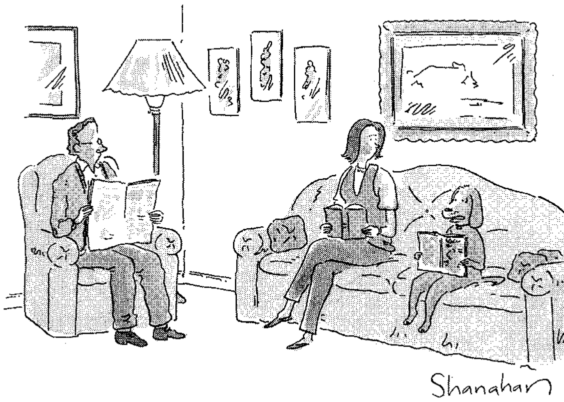
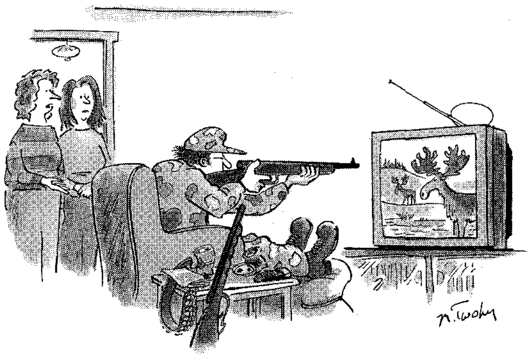
CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Robert Leighton, must be received by Sunday, October 16th. Finalists in the October 3rd contest appear below; go online to vote. We will announce the winner, along with the finalists in this week's contest, in the October 31st issue. The winner will be given a signed print of the cartoon. Any U.S. resident age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"'See Spot run.' 'See Spot run'? Who wrote this crap?"
Larry Martell, Albuquerque, N.M.



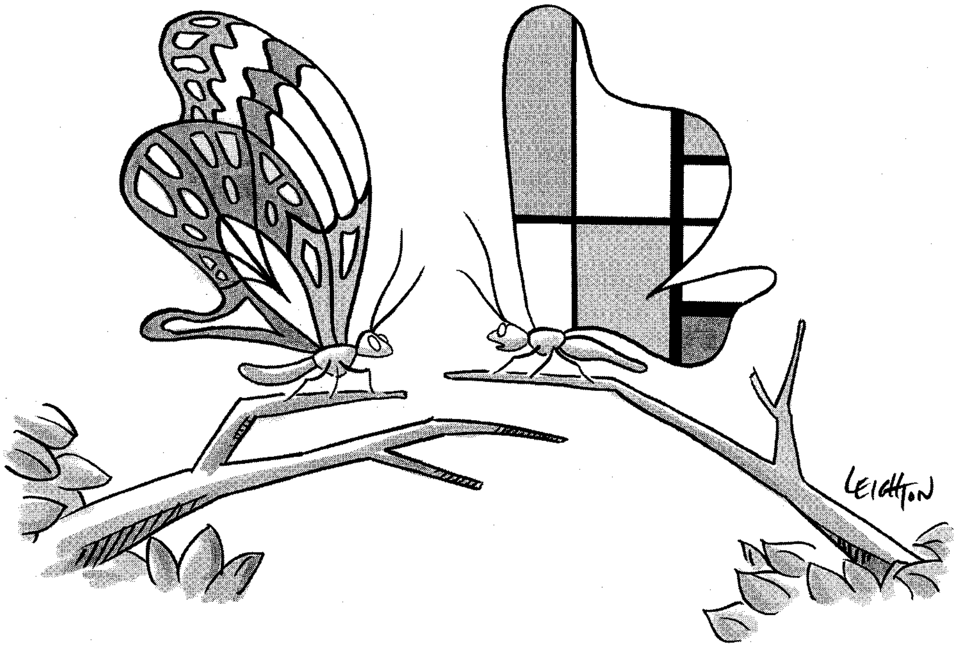
THE FINALISTS

"This is why I always dress in bright colors."
Simon Fraser, Philadelphia, Pa.

"We've got a thirty-six-inch plasma mounted in the den."
Tom Langefeld, Arlington Heights, Ill.

"It's our new interactive TV. When he's done,
I'm having an appendectomy on 'General Hospital.'"
Jeanne Tobin, Beachwood, Ohio

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



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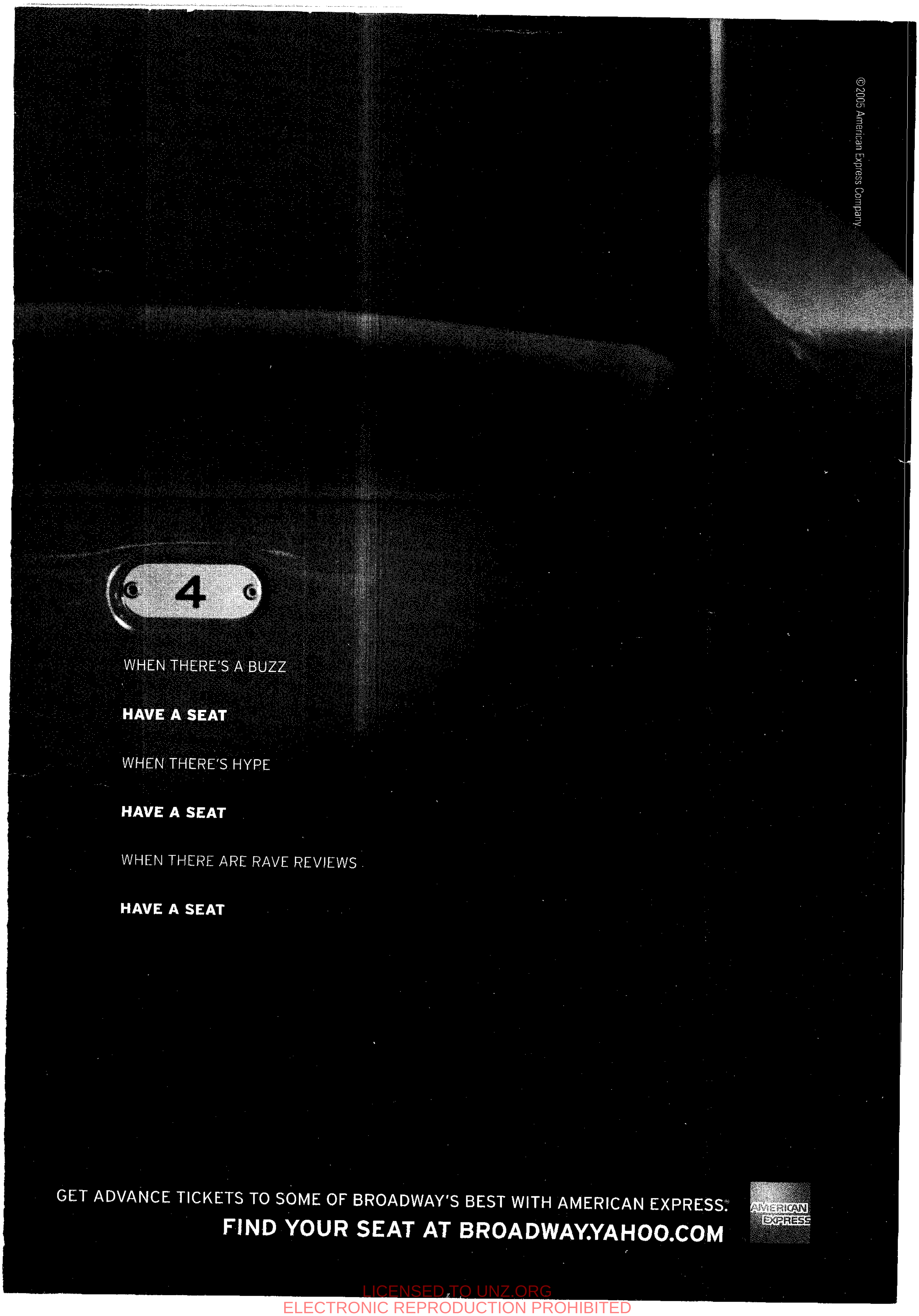

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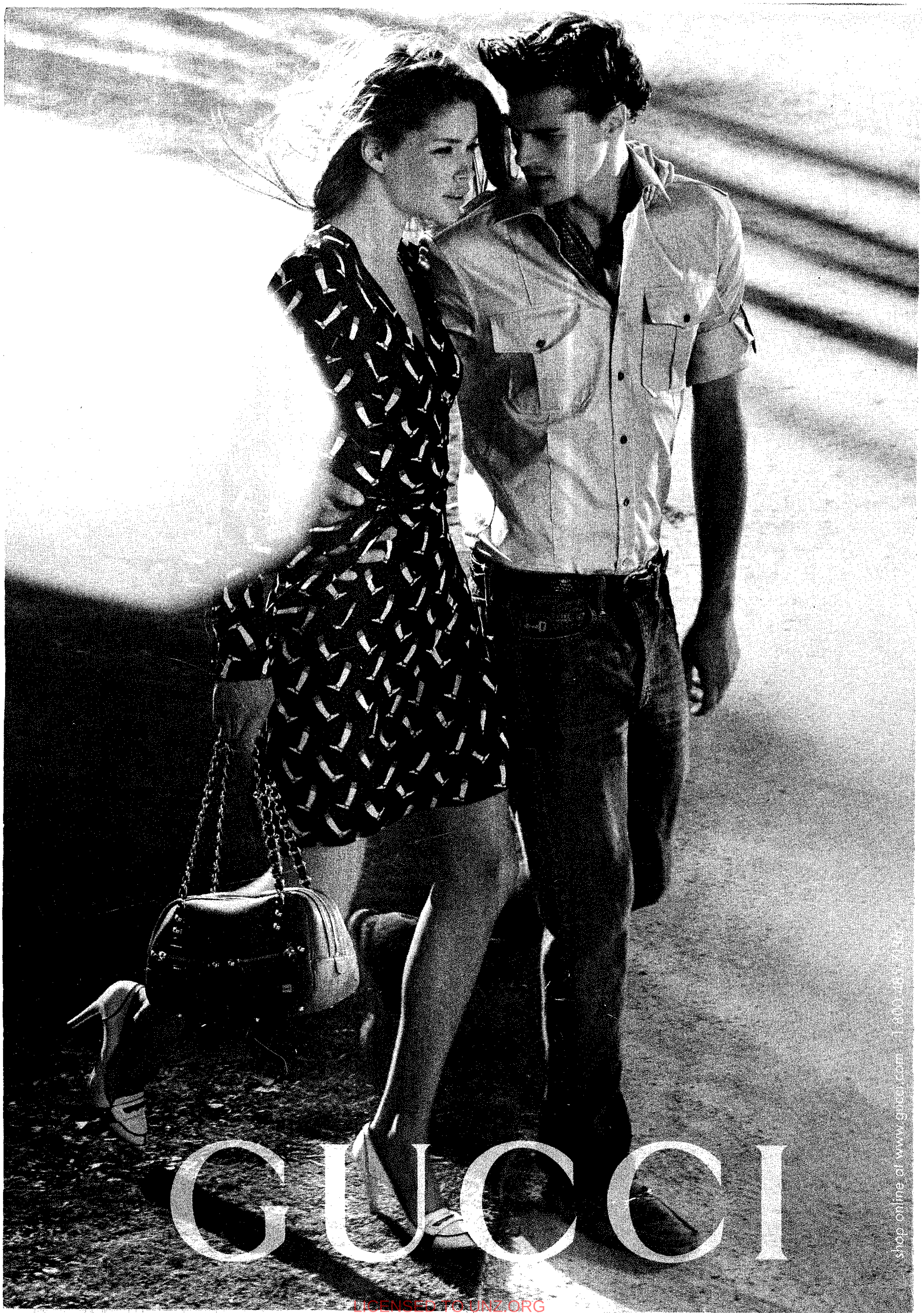
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